

Valentin Berezhev

HISTORY in the MAKING

Memoirs of World War II Diplomacy



Potsdam. Cecilienhof Palace.

The Heads of Government of the USSR, the USA, and Great Britain met at a conference here in 1945



Progress Publishers

The book *History in the Making* opens with a description of the pre-war situation in Europe under threat of Nazi aggression.

It reproduces the dramatic events of the winter and spring of 1941 when Nazi Germany was preparing to attack the Soviet Union, describes the complicated process of forming the anti-Hitler coalition and the Moscow Conference of the foreign ministers of the three great powers—Molotov, Hull and Eden.

The author gives a detailed account of the course of the Teheran Conference of 1943 and the negotiations between Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill, and traces the creation of the United Nations Charter.

A significant part of the book is devoted to the final stage of the anti-Hitler coalition's activity, to the disagreements between its participants and to the difficulties encountered in solving the problems of post-war organisation. Much light is thrown on the work of the Yalta and Potsdam conferences of the representatives of the three great powers.

The author, who had a direct part in many of the events described, recreates the diplomatic history of the Second World War in a lively and fascinating way.

Valentin Berezhtkov

***HISTORY
IN THE
MAKING***

*Memoirs
of World War II
Diplomacy*



Progress Publishers

Moscow

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MISSION TO BERLIN

Talks at Wilhelmstrasse

The Special Train

On the evening of November 9, 1940, a special non-scheduled train left the Byelorussky Station in Moscow. Its carriages were of European design, but its passengers were the staff of the Soviet delegation that was being sent to Berlin for talks with the German government.

Today the Soviet Union has direct rail contact with many states. A passenger can get on a train in Moscow and travel all the way to Berlin without having to get off, but before the Second World War Soviet carriages went only as far as the state border. There passengers would transfer to another train which would bring them to the first foreign station, where they had to board yet another train. This was due to the difference in gauge, for the present system of changing the bogies was not then in general use. In this respect the train provided for the Soviet delegation was also special for it was to cover the whole journey from Moscow to Berlin, its bogies being changed to the European type at the border.

That evening I took a leisurely meal in the restaurant car and returned to my compartment. I was a long time getting to sleep from all the excitement at the day's events. I had only learned about the journey the day before, so I had to finish off my work, go through passport and visa formalities, hurriedly pack my things and be at the station an hour before departure.

This was not my first trip abroad. In the spring and summer of that year I had worked at the Soviet Trade Delegation in Berlin and had been all over Germany and visited Belgium, Holland and Poland. Since in addition to my profession as an engi-

neer I had a good knowledge of German I was often invited to take part in responsible economic talks. In the autumn I had been recalled to Moscow and appointed to the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade. On those occasions when the Commissar himself (at the time it was Anastas Mikoyan) conducted talks with German trade delegations I acted as interpreter.

Through my work I knew that in recent months the Germans had held back deliveries of important equipment to the Soviet Union while at the same time they had insistently demanded that we for our part increase supplies of oil, grain, manganese and other materials. It was to be expected that these matters would be discussed in Berlin. But the composition of the Soviet delegation which included diplomatic and military personnel (it was headed by People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs V. M. Molotov) suggested that political questions would constitute the main subject of discussion. It was probably considered that I could be useful for the talks, and so I found myself among the passengers of this special train.

The international situation at the time was very strained. The attempts by the Soviet government over many years to come to an agreement with Britain and France concerning a joint rebuff to Hitler's aggression had proved unsuccessful. By the summer of 1939 it had become clear that the primary concern of the Western powers was to isolate the USSR and turn the Third Reich against it and then join Hitler in an anti-communist crusade. In this situation the Soviet government considered it necessary to accept the German proposal for a non-aggression pact with the German government. This made it possible for the Soviet Union, if only for a short time, to avert the danger of war and gain time to prepare for a rebuff to the Nazi aggression when it came.

Again, by concluding a treaty with Germany the Soviet Union was able to frustrate the plans that had long been mooted in the West for forming a common anti-Soviet front between Anglo-French reactionaries and German fascism. The fact that such a bloc was prevented from being formed was the main positive result of the treaty.

Also of considerable importance was the reunification of the Western Ukraine with the Soviet Ukraine and Western Byelorussia with Soviet Byelorussia and the fact that Latvia, Lithuania

and Estonia had become part of the Soviet Union, for these developments had resulted in the borders of the Soviet Union being moved considerably farther to the West.

Meanwhile, war had broken out in Western Europe. One country after another had fallen before Hitler's Blitzkrieg: Poland, Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium and finally France, whose government had signed the capitulation in Compiègne and moved out to the little resort of Vichy. Operation Sea Lion which was the projected German invasion of Britain had, however, been shelved by the German General Staff and military operations were now only being conducted in North Africa. Apart from this, the late summer and autumn of 1940 passed relatively peacefully.

The Soviet people, of course, were very anxious about what would happen next. How long would Hitler observe his commitments under the Soviet-German non-aggression pact? Would he turn East? By the autumn of 1940 Berlin had taken a number of steps which resulted in a worsening of Soviet-German relations. German troops landed in Finland and a German military mission went to Romania, Berlin began to put pressure on Bulgaria. The dates of delivery of German equipment to the Soviet Union were systematically put back. In this situation it was important to feel out Hitler's real intentions and this was one of the aims of the diplomatic mission which set out for Berlin in November 1940 at the invitation of the German government.

The next day on the train was an ordinary working day. We were connected with Moscow by radio and were able to follow international events. Our trip to Germany had already been announced and commented on both by German, and other foreign correspondents.

All the information we received was processed and briefs were prepared for the delegation members to be immediately typed out in several copies. Meanwhile the various specialists went through the documents they had taken with them that related to the history of Russo-German and Soviet-German relations, noting the points that might be of need in supporting our arguments during the talks.

Outside the carriage window the autumnal forests of Byelorussia flashed past. Here it was still warm with the sun peeping

out from behind the clouds and shining on the wet grass. Every four or five hundred metres along the track stood the lone figure of a sentry, his rifle across his shoulder with the bayonet fixed. Our route was under special guard.

The Purpose of the Pact

The sudden arrival in Moscow in August 1939 of Ribbentrop, the German Foreign Minister, and the subsequent conclusion of a non-aggression pact between the Soviet Union and Germany, states whose relations had been hitherto strained, if not hostile, had something of a sensational effect at the time. Many people did not understand the purpose of the pact and there was no lack of slanderous attacks against the Soviet Union aimed at discrediting the policy of what was then the only socialist state in the world and representing the agreement with Berlin as virtually tantamount to betrayal on the part of Moscow. The bourgeois propaganda machine in Britain and France was particularly vociferous in this respect, and yet it had been the leaders of these two countries who were primarily responsible for that situation. It had been due to them alone that the consistent struggle of the Soviet state for a system of collective security in Europe and for a joint rebuff to the fascist aggressors had proved unsuccessful.

Incidentally, even today, many decades after the event, the same old propaganda theme is often reiterated: in concluding the pact with Hitler's Germany in 1939 the USSR struck a blow in the back of the forces of democracy. It is still maintained by some that Moscow "suddenly" and "for no reason at all" refused an alliance with Britain and France and did a deal with Berlin in pursuit of its own "sinister designs". This is a theme which is usually repeated by those who know only too well what the real state of affairs was. They bring out the old story of the 1939 Soviet-German pact to bolster up the propaganda that they use today to cast a slur on the peace policy of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, to hinder their struggle for international security and for the principles of peaceful coexistence between states with different social systems. Obviously, those who are descended politically from the Munich men of the 1930s who

on the eve of the Second World War frustrated the Soviet proposals for collective security in Europe will not succeed in their attempts to revive anti-Soviet hysteria. But even so, attempts of this nature poison the international atmosphere in one way or another and distort historical truth.

At the same time, however, there are people who really do wish to understand the reasons behind events of that period, and at times this can be no easy task, for the Soviet-German pact of 1939, for instance, is a subject which has been literally drowned in oceans of misinformation.

One often hears questions like: was it really necessary for the USSR to conclude a non-aggression pact with Hitler? Would it not have been more correct to reject even the very idea of such a pact? Such questions are usually put by the younger generation who have insufficient knowledge of the facts and have no idea of what the international situation was like at the time.

In 1939 the leaders of Britain and France were primarily concerned to turn Hitler's aggression against the Soviet Union. They hoped with Nazi aid to do away with the socialist power they hated and destroy Bolshevism once and for all. They also had an alternative goal. They hoped that in the course of a conflict between the USSR and Germany, irrespective of its outcome, both sides would be weakened considerably, and then London and Paris might enter into the conflict at its final stage in order to impose a "peace" which would benefit Anglo-French imperialism. For this short-sighted policy both countries had to pay dearly—France by being occupied, Britain by being placed on the verge of catastrophe.

Let us briefly recall the events of the period. Throughout the spring and summer of 1939 talks were held in Moscow between the Soviet Union and delegations from Britain and France. In the course of these talks the Soviet Union insistently demanded the setting up of a system of collective security and the organisation of a joint rebuff to fascist aggression. But the Western powers consistently prevaricated. They set up all sorts of obstacles so as to prevent any agreement being reached, although the situation in Europe was daily worsening.

It was obvious that the threat of a German attack hung primarily over the USSR and the Soviet government was therefore faced with the urgent task of preventing, or at least putting it

off for as long as possible. But the terms put forward by Britain and France were such as to essentially open the way east for Hitler's hordes across the Baltic states.

The British plan was for the Soviet Union to aid—i.e. to “fight in behalf of” any of the USSR's European neighbours—in the event of them being attacked, provided that such aid was “desirable”. The USSR's European neighbours at that time were Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and Romania. The two last named countries were given British and French guarantees. Consequently, in providing such aid the Soviet Union could expect to rely on an alliance with Britain and France against a potential aggressor. But in the event of a German invasion via Finland or the Baltic states the Soviet Union could not, under the British plan, expect any aid from the two great Western powers. Furthermore, Poland refused to allow Soviet troops to pass through its territory, which was one of the reasons why the agreement was wrecked.

The British and French proposals all but prompted Hitler how the Soviet Union could be forced into a war in conditions of complete isolation. The Soviet Union was being required to provide unilateral guarantees of aid to Britain, France and certain of their allies without any similar obligations being undertaken by these countries to aid the Soviet state in the event of its being attacked by Hitler.

What the Soviet Union wanted was the creation of an effective military alliance capable of protecting the interests of all European countries and ensuring peace and security on the continent. On April 17 and April 19, 1939, the British and the French governments respectively were submitted proposals for the conclusion of a tripartite equitable treaty that would provide effective mutual aid in the event of any one of them being attacked by an aggressor. In particular the Soviet proposal stated:

“England, France and the USSR to conclude with one another an agreement for a period of five to ten years by which they would oblige themselves to render mutually forthwith all manner of assistance including that of a military nature, in case of aggression in Europe against any one of the contracting Powers.

“England, France and USSR to undertake to render all manner of assistance, including that of a military nature, to Eastern European States situated between the Baltic and the Black Seas

and bordering on the USSR, in case of aggression against these states."¹

The British reply which was not received till May 8 showed that London had made no essential changes in its position. Only on July 1 did the British government finally agree to the Soviet proposal to offer guarantees to the Baltic States and Finland, but it was already too late to implement it. On July 7, Estonia and Latvia signed treaties with Germany.

British and French reluctance to come to a serious agreement with the Soviet Union was also shown by the fact that for the talks in Moscow they sent only junior officials who did not even possess written authority to sign a pact. The British, for example, sent William Strang, a third-rate Foreign Office clerk, who was noted only for his pathological anticommunism. Furthermore, while the clouds of war were gathering over Europe and time was running out fast for the organisation of a rebuff to aggression, the British military delegation headed by the long retired Admiral Drax set sail from London on a slow passenger-cargo boat. (This can be contrasted with the fact that in the autumn of 1938, when the British Prime Minister Chamberlain set out to sign the Munich deal with Hitler which resulted in the betrayal of Czechoslovakia, he considered it necessary to fly by plane). The Soviet delegation, on the other hand, which was headed by People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs V. M. Molotov and, when military matters were discussed, by Commissar for Defence, Marshal K. E. Voroshilov did have the necessary authority to sign agreements.

Let us consider the alternatives facing the Soviet Union towards the end of the summer of 1939 when talks with the British and French had reached a deadlock, and it had become quite plain that London and Paris had no intention of coming to an agreement with Moscow. It was at that time that a proposal had been made from Berlin for the conclusion of a Soviet-German non-aggression pact.

It should, of course, be borne in mind that the German government realised the enormous danger of starting a war against the USSR. In 1939 the Germans had not yet got possession of

¹ *Documents on British Foreign Policy. 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. 5, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1952, p. 228.

all the resources that they were to have by 1941 through the invasion of almost the whole of Western Europe. The Nazis had not yet been intoxicated by the easy victories in the West. They had not yet ventured to accomplish their aggressive designs by launching a war against such a powerful opponent as the USSR. From recently published documents it is clear that Hitler was even ready to go to Moscow himself if Ribbentrop's mission had ended in failure. In Berlin it was quite accepted at the time that Germany should first go looking for plunder in other directions.

With this in mind the German government proposed in early 1939 the conclusion of a trade agreement with the USSR. In the atmosphere of extreme hostility that then characterised the German attitude towards the Soviet Union the development of economic relations between the two countries was considered by the Soviet government to be a matter of considerable difficulty. This was pointed out on May 10, 1939, in a conversation between Molotov and the German ambassador. On May 30 the German Staatssekretär, von Weizsäcker, in a conversation with G. A. Astakhov, the Soviet Chargé d'affaires in Berlin, explored the possibilities for holding talks on improving relations between the two countries. The German ambassador in Moscow von Schulenburg was even more definite on the subject during his talk with Astakhov on June 17 in Berlin. On June 25, Julius Schnurre, a high-ranking official from the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, referring to his talks with Ribbentrop, told Astakhov that political relations between the USSR and Germany should be improved. All of these probes on the part of the Germans were ignored by the Soviet government. But the subsequent course of the talks with Britain and France left the Soviet side without any hope that a satisfactory agreement could be reached. What was to be done?

The Soviet government could, of course, decline the German proposal for a pact, but then Hitler would present such a refusal as evidence of Moscow's "aggressive intentions". He would declare to the German people that their Führer's desire for reconciliation with Moscow had been "rudely rejected" and that Germany had no other alternative than to deal a "forestalling" blow to the USSR. In this event the leaders of Britain and France who had signed the Munich Agreement and who were utterly hostile to the Soviet Union, would only be rubbing their

hands with glee, for their dream of pushing Hitler against the Soviet Union would be much nearer to realisation.

Could the Soviet Union at that time have expected any help from London, Paris or Washington in its single combat with the might of Hitler's Germany? Everything seems to suggest that it could not even have relied on their neutrality. It was more than likely that instead of an anti-Hitler coalition in the early 1940s there would have been an anti-Soviet coalition of the imperialist powers. The Soviet Union would then have had to face a Nazi invasion alone with the Western powers if not actually fighting on Hitler's side, at least supplying him with strategic materials and arms. After all, when the Soviet Union and Britain were Allies in 1941, influential quarters in both London and Washington did not wish to see the Soviet people victorious. So it would not have been difficult to see with which side the sympathies of ruling quarters in the Western powers would have lain, had Hitler attacked the Soviet Union in 1939. At the same time the Soviet Union could hardly expect to see the Japanese militarists keep aloof, since they had long had their eyes on the Soviet Far East.

Japanese militarists, it should be remembered, were behaving particularly aggressively. Their invasion of Mongolia was virtually a test of Soviet military strength. Thus Japanese aggressive intentions on the one hand and the encouragement given by the Western powers for Hitler to attack the Soviet Union on the other faced our country with the threat of a war on two fronts. The Soviet-German pact, while not removing this threat completely, at least postponed it indefinitely.

If Hitler had invaded the Soviet Union in June 1939, instead of in June 1941, our country would have been in a very difficult situation. It was only in 1940 and 1941 that the USSR began the production of a number of important modern weapons like anti-tank guns, T-34 tanks and dive-bombers. Furthermore, there was the important experience gained in the winter war against Finland.

Then again, there was the geographical factor that should be taken into account. In 1939 the Soviet border with bourgeois Poland ran close to Minsk and Kiev, the White Finns were near Leningrad, and monarchic Rumania bordered close to Odessa. Had a war broken out then Hitler in all probability would have

had as his allies not only Finland and Rumania, as he did in 1941, but also Poland and the bourgeois Baltic states.

Of course, even in these extremely unfavourable conditions the Soviet people would undoubtedly have eventually emerged victorious in a war against Nazi Germany. But the casualties and losses in such a conflict would have been immeasurably greater and the war itself would have gone on much longer. If, on the other hand, the Soviet Union had indeed fallen before the Nazi hordes—and it was this that the “Western democracies” were hoping for—Hitler would easily have crushed France and Britain and, together with Japan, pounced upon the United States. The history of our planet would have been thrown several centuries back. This was what the short-sighted policies of the Western powers were fraught with.

Finally, there was the fact that the German proposal to conclude a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union suggested that Hitler had decided that at first other countries would fall victim to his war machine. From this it followed that a protracted war could be expected in Western Europe. No one could imagine at that time that France would fall so soon (it withstood the Germans for only a few months) and that Britain would prefer the humiliating retreat from Dunkirk just in order to save its manpower and would then dig itself in on its home ground beyond the Channel. On the contrary, there was every reason to expect a drawn-out conflict between the imperialist powers from which the Soviet Union—then the only socialist state in the world—could for a time, if not for the whole war, keep aloof. Reasoning of this kind could also influence the decision to accept the German proposal for a pact in 1939.

All these circumstances had to be carefully analysed and weighed before deciding how to reply to the German proposal. There was also the very important, and ultimately decisive consideration that signing the pact would give additional time for building up the country's defences against an aggressor. And besides this, the whole of mankind would once again see how consistent the peace-loving policy of the Soviet state was.

It is worth remembering here how Stalin explained the purpose of the pact in his radio broadcast on July 3, 1941:

“It may be asked: How could the Soviet Government have consented to conclude a non-aggression pact with such perfidious

people, and such fiends as Hitler and Ribbentrop? Was this not an error on the part of the Soviet Government? Of course not. A non-aggression pact is a pact of peace between two states. It was precisely such a pact that Germany proposed to us in 1939. Could the Soviet Government decline such a proposal? I think that not a single peace-loving state could decline a peace treaty with a neighbouring country even if that country is headed by such monsters and cannibals as Hitler and Ribbentrop. But that, of course, only on the one indispensable condition that this peace treaty did not jeopardize, either directly or indirectly, the territorial integrity, independence and honour of the peace-loving state. As is well known, the non-aggression pact between Germany and the USSR was precisely such a pact.

"What did we gain by concluding the non-aggression pact with Germany? We secured our country peace for a year and a half and the opportunity of preparing our forces to repulse fascist Germany should she risk an attack on our country despite the pact. This was a definite advantage for us and a disadvantage for fascist Germany.

"What has fascist Germany gained and what has she lost by perfidiously tearing up the pact and attacking the USSR? She has gained a certain advantageous position for her troops for a short period of time, but she has lost politically by exposing herself in the eyes of the entire world as a bloodthirsty aggressor. There can be no doubt that this short-lived military gain for Germany is only an episode, while the tremendous political gain of the USSR is a weighty and lasting factor that is bound to form the basis for the development of decisive military success of the Red Army in the war with fascist Germany."¹

In recent years a number of documents have been released which reveal the real intentions of certain Western politicians in the late 1930s. In particular, there are many interesting admissions contained in the official Foreign Office material recently released in London. They confirm what was known previously that the Western politicians did not want to come to an agreement with the Soviet Union on rebuffing Hitler and that, on the contrary, they did everything to turn him against the USSR, hoping to remain on the side-track of the conflict themselves.

¹ J. Stalin, *On the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1944, pp. 9-10.

In this situation the Soviet government had no other choice than to accept the German proposal and conclude a non-aggression pact with that country.

Of course, the Soviet government could not and did not expect that the Nazis would abide by their commitments. But even a temporary prolongation of peace was a matter of extreme importance to the Soviet Union. The situation was highly unfavourable, since a war in the summer of 1939 would have put the USSR at an enormous disadvantage. For, as already mentioned, it would have been both isolated and faced with an enemy on two fronts—Germany in the West and Japan in the East.

In averting a war in such a difficult situation, the Soviet government did its duty not only to its own people, but also to the international proletariat: it resorted to the only means it had for ensuring the security of the USSR.

It was entirely through the fault of the Western powers that no system of collective security was set up in 1939, as the USSR insisted upon. On the other hand, things did not turn out as the Munich men would have them either—there was no war between the imperialists and the Soviet Union. The war began within the capitalist world, between two antagonistic groups of imperialist powers.

Postponing the USSR's involvement in the Second World War gave time for the country to build up its defences, heighten its combat readiness and modernise its weapons.

From the point of view of foreign policy the gain was great. The international situation during the initial stage of the Second World War was such that when the USSR was forced to enter the war in 1941 it was no longer threatened with isolation as could have happened in the summer of 1939. Britain was now fighting Germany and the imperialist contradictions between the United States on the one hand and Germany and Japan on the other had now become so acute that the possibility of a deal between the United States government and the fascist aggressors was now highly unlikely. Thus the objective prerequisites were formed for the setting up of an anti-fascist coalition between the biggest powers—the Soviet Union, the United States and Britain.

Incident at Eydtkuhnen

At night our special train arrived at the border and, having passed through the no-man's-land, came to a halt. The noise of the wheels stopped and from the outside came a voice calling "Eydtkuhnen Station!". For a while it was absolutely quiet and then we heard the rapid thud of leather boots pounding along the platform and the sound of excited voices coming from the distance. There was some sort of an argument going on, but the words were indistinguishable. I went out on the platform, where it seemed pitch-black, because of the blackout. But gradually my eyes got used to the dark and I moved off in the direction from which the voices were coming. Among the group of those arguing was the chief of our train, who was trying to explain something to a German officer in a long leather coat. The officer's interpreter, a frail little man in civilian clothes, spoke badly in Russian, so I offered my services.

It turned out that the Germans had prepared their own train and were asking us to transfer into it. The chief of the train objected—he had had instructions to take the delegation directly to Berlin and the bogies had already been changed on the border. The Germans maintained that the size of our carriages was larger than the accepted standard on the German railways, but it was pointed out to them that our train had been specially made up of European-type carriages. But the Germans would not have it, and it was finally decided to uncouple one carriage and put it through a special piece of equipment that measured its size. A shunting engine was brought up, points were changed and we found ourselves being taken slowly up a small branch line in the pitch dark. Here was the equipment which the train had to pass under without touching any one of the little balls suspended from it. As the carriage passed under, one of the little balls did slightly touch the roof, and the German officer called out in exultant tones:

"There you are, I told you, your train is too large. You will all have to transfer to German coaches."

In the end they decided to couple two German saloon carriages to our train.

The German carriages were very comfortable with one-berth compartments, an excellent bar and restaurant and salons fitted

with radios. There were even vases of fresh roses in the compartments. Obviously, it was not concern for our comfort that made the German so stubborn in insisting that we should change trains. Undoubtedly their carriages were not only equipped with a fine bar, but with a fine lot of bugging apparatus too.

In the early hours of the morning we continued our journey. The German train moved at a speed which for us at the time was unusually fast. At dawn we could see soldiers placed all along the railway embankment. They stood with their legs widely apart, their backs to the train and their submachine-guns slung over their shoulders. The morning sun flashed ominously on their steel helmets.

The Bellevue Hotel

In the morning of November 13 the train arrived at Anhalter Station in Berlin. Outside it was drizzling. We were welcomed by the Foreign Minister Ribbentrop and Field Marshal Keitel, who both shook hands with the Soviet representatives. Ribbentrop made a short speech in which he said that on behalf of the Führer and on his own behalf he was pleased to welcome the Soviet government delegation in the capital of the Third Reich. Then we all moved along the covered platform to the station building. In the first hall we entered we saw the Soviet and the German flags fixed to the wall above a large basket of flowers draped in pink, all of this being spotlighted from the side.

In the square outside the station the rain was now much heavier and there were puddles everywhere. The shaggy grey clouds were so low that they seemed to touch the roofs of the houses. A guard of honour marched past splashing through the water. A military band struck up, but everything went very quiet when they got to the Soviet National Anthem. Then, probably for the first time since 1933 the loud strains of the "Internationale" were heard in Berlin. For singing that song of the proletariat, people had been thrown in death camps by the Gestapo and now here, outside the Anhalter Station, German generals and the high-ranking officials of the Nazi Reich had to stand at attention while the Communist anthem was played. One other detail from that meeting outside the station has been etched on my memory. On our right there was a tall brick building of some

sort of factory and I could see the workers waving red handkerchiefs and scarves from the windows. . .

After the official ceremony was over we all got into black Mercedes limousines and the whole cortege accompanied by motorcyclists in steel helmets drove through the half-empty streets of the city to the Bellevue Hotel, where everything had been made ready to receive the Soviet delegation. The hotel was an old palace intended for guests of the German government. Built at the end of the 19th century and once belonging to the family of the Kaiser the palace stood in the grounds of a park that was full of shady trees and exotic plants. A long avenue of limes led to the entrance. Inside we were amazed at the ostentation of the rooms. Everywhere we could smell the delicate scent of roses coming from the bouquets which stood in tall porcelain vases in every corner. The walls were decorated with tapestries and paintings in heavy gilt frames. There were statuettes and vases of the finest porcelain standing all around in exquisitely carved cabinets. Very likely some of the treasures that had been plundered by the Hitlerites in the occupied countries had already found their way here. The furniture was antique and the servants and waiters were garbed in gold-braided livery. All this lent the hotel an air of ceremonial pomposity.

We were to be accommodated on the first floor where there were guestrooms with baths. I was given a modestly furnished small room with a wooden bed, a simple desk and a wall cupboard. The only decoration in the room was the Dürer engraving on the wall.

Having quickly shaved and changed my clothes I went downstairs. In the large dark oak-panelled dining room several round tables had been laid. The breakfast ceremony had been carefully planned in every detail. Every guest had his own place indicated by a card. When the whole assembly was seated, waiters in white gloves brought round the food, wine, coffee, sweet meals under the direction of a tall, grey-haired maitre d'hotel whose chest was adorned by a gold chain and a huge medal and who silently conducted the proceedings with nothing more than a barely noticeable gesture or look. After we had finished eating cigars and cognac were brought round.

After rising from the table the Soviet delegates accompanied by their experts set off immediately for the Reichskanzlei where

they were to have their first meeting with Hitler. The interpreting and recording of the minutes of the meeting was to be done by V. N. Pavlov, then first secretary at our embassy in Berlin, and myself.

Leaving the park the line of black limousines under motor-cycle escort turned on to the Charlottenburger Chaussee and, passing the Brandenburg Gates, carried on down Wilhelmstrasse. Here there were bigger crowds which in some places filled the whole pavement. People looked silently at the little red flag with its gold hammer and sickle that was fixed to the radiator of the first limousine. Some of them actually dared to wave.

In the Reichskanzlei

Slowing down the motorcade entered the inner courtyard of the Reichskanzlei. The building, which had been erected in a style favoured by the Nazis—a hotchpotch of classical and Gothic elements and ancient Teutonic symbols—was far from attractive in appearance. The rectangular courtyard was dark and forbidding and looked more like a barracks square or a prison yard. It was encircled with high columns of dark-grey marble and paved with granite slabs of the same grey colour. The eagles with their outstretched wings and swastikas in their claws, the smooth portico that beetled over the columns and the silent, motionless figures of the guards in their grey-green helmets all combined to give the place a sinister atmosphere.

The tall bronze-clad doors led into a spacious vestibule and from there into an enfilade of dimly lit rooms and windowless hallways which were lined by people in various kinds of uniform. Like automatons they raised their right arms in the Nazi salute and clicked their heels. At the main entrance we were met by Staatssekretär Otto Meissner, who took us by the longest route so that all this pomposity should not fail to impress us.

Finally we arrived in a round, brightly lit vestibule in the centre of which stood a table with soft drinks and snacks on it. Sitting along the wall on sofas were a number of German officials, specialists and officers of the guard. Waiters moved noiselessly among them. Our experts were also required to wait here. Only the head of the Soviet delegation, V. M. Molotov, his deputy

V. G. Dekanozov and the interpreters went into Hitler's office, which was next door to the round hall.

The entry into Hitler's room was invested with the theatricality that only the Nazis were capable of. Two tall blond SS men in black tightly belted uniforms with skulls on their caps clicked their heels and threw open the tall, almost ceiling-high doors with a single, well-practised gesture. Then, with their backs to the door jambs and their right-arms raised, they formed a kind of arch, through which we had to pass to enter Hitler's office, a vast room that was more like a banqueting hall than an office. The walls were hung with enormous tapestries, and a thick carpet lay in the centre of the room. On the right as you came in there was a kind of lounge with a coffee table, a sofa and some armchairs. On the left, at the opposite end of the room stood a huge polished desk and in the corner on a massive ebony stand there was a huge globe of the world.

A Meeting with Hitler

Hitler sat at his desk, and in that vast room his small figure dressed in a mousy-green tunic was hardly noticeable. On one arm of the tunic he wore a red armband with a black swastika on a white circular background. His chest was decorated with an iron cross.

I had seen Hitler before at parades and meetings. Now I had the opportunity of viewing him close up. As we entered the Führer observed us silently for a moment, then, with a sudden movement, stood up and walked to the centre of the room with small, rapid steps. Here he stopped and raised his arm in the Nazi salute, bending his palm unnaturally. Still without a word, he came up close and shook each one of us by the hand. His palm was cold and moist to the touch, and his feverish eyes seemed to bore through you like gimlets. His sharp, pimply nose jutted out absurdly over his short moustache.

Having briefly expressed his pleasure at welcoming the Soviet delegation to Berlin, Hitler proposed that we sit at the table in the lounge part of his office. At that moment Ribbentrop appeared from behind a curtain in the far corner of the room, which obviously concealed another entrance. He was followed by Schmidt, Hitler's personal interpreter, and Hilger, who had been

a counsellor at the German embassy in Moscow and who knew Russian well. We all then went over to the lounge section.

Hitler invited Molotov to take a place on the sofa and then sat down himself in an arm-chair on the other side of the table. Hilger sat on his right, then Ribbentrop, and, finally, Schmidt. Molotov's deputy took his place on his chief's left, while I sat down on his right. Pavlov occupied the arm-chair between me and Hitler.

The conversation began with Hitler's long monologue. Possibly, he had prepared a text, but he didn't use it. His speech flowed smoothly without any hesitation, like that of an actor who knew his lines well. Each phrase was pronounced clearly and he made regular pauses for the interpreters.

On the German side Hilger acted as interpreter. He had spent many years in the Soviet Union and knew Russian almost as well as his native language. He even looked a little like a Russian. When on Sundays he used to don a Russian peasant shirt and a straw hat and go fishing on the Klyazma River near Moscow wearing his pince-nez, passers-by would take him for one of Chekhov's characters. Hilger even boasted that he managed to get a lot of interesting information from chatting to other anglers. Now he was sitting, stiff as a board, in the black full-dress uniform of the German ministry of foreign affairs. Next to him sat Schmidt with a notepad on his knee, taking down the minutes of the meeting. Though he had an excellent command of several European languages, Schmidt did not know Russian and so had to record the minutes. Pavlov and I took turns in translating and in taking down the minutes.

The gist of what Hitler had to say was that Britain was now on its knees and its final capitulation was only a matter of time. The country, he assured us, would soon be destroyed by bombs. He then went on to give a brief review of the military situation pointing out that the German Empire already controlled the whole of Western Europe. Together with their Italian allies the German forces were now conducting successful operations in Africa, from which the British would soon be driven out once and for all. Thus, he concluded, the victory of the Axis powers was assured and it was time to think about the organisation of the world after the victory.

Here he began to speak at length of what was to happen to

the British Empire, spread as it was throughout the world, when the inevitable collapse of Great Britain left it leaderless. The German government, he stated, had already discussed the question with the Italian and the Japanese governments and was now interested to hear the opinion of the Soviet government. For his own part, he intended to make more concrete proposals on this matter at a later stage.

When Hitler began to talk about carving up the British Empire Ribbentrop nodded his head approvingly and made some notes in his pad. Most of the time he had sat with his arms folded on his chest, staring at Hitler. Occasionally he would put both his hands on the table and tap it lightly with his fingers, and after looking round the table at each of those present in a manner that gave none of his thoughts away, would resume his former pose.

Schmidt rapidly covered the sheets of lined paper that were held together with a special clip with rows of shorthand. Neither Pavlov nor myself at the time knew shorthand, but we had both developed our own system of rapid writing. This system, although primitive, meant that we could accurately reproduce the conversation especially if it were deciphered immediately afterwards.

When Hitler had finished his speech, which, allowing for the time spent on translation, took about an hour, it was Molotov's turn to reply. Without entering into any discussion of Hitler's proposals, he noted that there were more urgent and specific questions that needed discussion first. Could the Reichschancellor, for instance, explain what the German military mission was doing in Romania and why it had been sent there without prior consultation with the Soviet government? After all, the Soviet-German non-aggression pact that had been concluded in 1939 stipulated the holding of joint consultations on important issues that affected the interests of both sides. The Soviet government was also interested to know why German troops had been sent to Finland, and why this serious move had also been undertaken without consultation with Moscow.

The effect of these questions on Hitler was like a cold shower, and for all his histrionic talents the Führer could not disguise his confusion. Speaking very quickly he said that the German military mission had been sent to Romania at the request of the

Antonescu government to train Romanian troops. As for the presence of German troops in Finland, they were not going to stay for a long time there, he claimed, but were on their way to Norway.

This explanation, of course, did not satisfy the Soviet delegation. On the basis of reports from its representatives in both Romania and Finland, Molotov stated, the Soviet government had formed a completely different opinion. The troops that had landed on the southern coast of Finland were in fact not moving anywhere and obviously intended to stay in that country for a long period of time. In Romania it was not just a question of the military mission—German troops were being sent there in increasingly greater numbers. And there were already far too many for one military mission. So what then, Molotov wanted to know, was the purpose of these troop movements? This sort of thing could not but arouse anxiety in Moscow and the German government must therefore give a clear and precise answer to these questions.

Here Hitler resorted to the old diplomatic ploy of pretending that he had not been fully informed. Having promised to find out about the questions posed by the Soviet side, Hitler went on to say that he considered all these matters of secondary importance. Now, he said returning to his original theme, was the time to discuss problems relating to the impending victory of the Axis powers.

Then once again Hitler began to expound his fantastic plans for dividing up the world. Britain, he declared, would soon be defeated and occupied by German troops, while it would take many years before the United States could present a threat to the "new Europe". It was, therefore, time to think of creating a "new order" throughout the world. The German and the Italian governments had already outlined their spheres of interest in this new order, which included Europe and Africa. Japan was interested in East Asia. On this basis, Hitler explained, the Soviet Union might show interest in the territory south of its frontier, in the direction of the Indian Ocean, which would give it access to warm water ports. . .

Here Molotov interrupted Hitler to say that he could see no point in discussing schemes of this kind. The Soviet government was only interested in preserving the peace and security of the

countries bordering on the Soviet Union.

Hitler paid no attention to this interruption and proceeded to expound his plan for the division of the British Empire now that it was about to become leaderless. The conversation began to assume a strange character with the Germans seeming not to hear what was said to them. Molotov continued to insist upon discussing specific issues relating to the security of the Soviet Union and other independent European states and to demand that the German government explain its recent actions which threatened the independence of countries that bordered on the Soviet Union. But again and again Hitler tried to turn the conversation towards his plans and do everything he could to involve the Soviet government in a discussion of his madcap schemes.

The conversation continued for two and a half hours. Suddenly Hitler looked at his watch and suggested postponing the discussion till the following day in view of a possible air-raid.

Everyone stood up and Ribbentrop asked if there were any objections to inviting in the press. As there were none, Schmidt jumped up from his chair and went over to the door leading into the vestibule. Poking his head out, he muttered something, and immediately the room was filled with people armed with photo and cine cameras. They included the newspaper photographer from the *Pravda*, M. M. Kalashnikov. At the request of the reporters the participants in the talks once more took their places around the table and were photographed from various angles. Then a few group shots were taken and probably the whole thing would have gone on indefinitely had not Ribbentrop asked the photographers to leave.

Hitler said that he hoped the Soviet representatives would enjoy themselves in Berlin. Molotov reminded Hitler that a reception would be held that evening in the Soviet Embassy and invited him to attend. Hitler replied vaguely that he would try to come. Having bidden our farewells we all left the office and were once more led through the enfilade of halls to the inner courtyard of the Reichskanzlei.

The early autumnal twilight had already descended upon the city. A biting wind was blowing and the streets were deserted. The black Mercedes cars took us back quickly to the Bellevue Hotel. There behind the heavy blinds the lights were shining brightly, it was warm and the air was filled with the scent of

freshly cut roses. Immediately upon arrival a report was prepared on the talks which was encoded and then telegraphed to Moscow.

That evening at the Soviet embassy on the Unter den Linden a grand reception was held in honour of the Soviet government delegation's stay in Berlin. The banqueting table was laid out in a huge marble hall. It was adorned with gorgeous carnations and antique silver plate. A banquet service for five hundred people, which had been kept in the embassy for special occasions longer than anyone could remember, was brought out. Hitler, as it turned out, did not put in an appearance, from which it was concluded that he had been displeased with the course of the talks. However, Reichsmarshall Goering and many other top Nazis did attend. His corpulent bulk, which somehow reminded one of an enormous peacock, attracted the general attention. His love of ostentation, luxury and theatricality was truly fantastic. Having been promoted to the rank of Reichsmarschall—the only title of its kind in the Third Reich—he designed for himself a special uniform of silver-thread fabric. From shoulder to waist his chest was covered in medals, other decorations and motley ribbons, and each of his fingers was adorned with several rings, all with precious stones. The story was current at the time that at home he liked to dress in a Roman toga and wore sandals studded with diamonds. He certainly had numerous astoundingly luxurious villas.

Goering's extravagance gave him a kind of respectability in the eyes of Western politicians. They called him a "sporting type", a "society man" and this made it easier for Chamberlain and the other Munich men before the war to claim that there was something "decent" in Nazism.

Yet Goering, of course, was one of the worst Nazi criminals. Both a drug addict and a psychotic, he had spent several years in a mental hospital before Hitler came to power. When the Nazi putsch brought him to the crest of power he gave free rein to his whims and base passions. It was Goering who set up the concentration camps during the first years of the Nazi Reich (later Himmler assumed control over them) and it was also Goering who first proposed the use of foreign slave labour at German plants and factories.

Also present at the embassy reception was Rudolf Hess, then

considered to be third man on the Reich after Hitler and Goering (at the beginning of the war Hitler declared that in the event of his death Goering should be made Führer and in the event of the latter's death, too, Hess should take his place).

The first toasts were hardly over when the sirens sounded the air-raid warning—British bombers were on their way to Berlin.

The embassy had no air-raid shelter and so the guests hurriedly began to leave. The first to go were the high-ranking Nazis. In taking his leave of the Soviet representatives Goering, despite all his super-self-confidence, was clearly embarrassed. After all, he had boasted on many occasions that the Luftwaffe under his command would wipe Britain from the face of the earth. But the British still continued to bomb Germany. The present raid on Berlin was particularly embarrassing to the Nazi leaders, since they had tried to do everything to give the impression that Britain was finished.

Accompanied by their aides Goering, Hess and Ribbentrop hurriedly descended the broad marble staircase to the entrance of the embassy where their cars were awaiting them. When they had departed the other guests began to leave. Most of these walked up the Unter den Linden to the Brandenburg Gates where they took shelter in the underground railway station.

The Soviet delegation returned to the Bellevue Hotel where a comfortable air-raid shelter had been built in the cellars. Here, just as in the hotel halls, there were expensive paintings and tapestries. Waiters brought round soft drinks. Two hours later the "all-clear" was given and we all went up to our rooms.

The Talks Continue

The next day, November 14, the second meeting with Hitler took place. The Soviet delegation had already received a coded reply to our report from Moscow, which also included further instructions. The Soviet government categorically rejected the German proposal to involve the Soviet delegation in a discussion concerning the division of British possessions. The delegation was once again instructed to insist that the German government explain the questions relating to the problem of European security and also other matters which directly affected the interests of the Soviet Union.

This time the conversation with Hitler lasted almost three hours and at times became very heated.

When after the exchange of greetings we were all seated round the table in the Reichschancellor's office, Molotov began to speak.

In conformity with the instructions received from Moscow he outlined the Soviet position and then went over to the problem of the German troops in Finland. The Soviet government, he declared, insisted that it should be informed as to the true reasons why German troops had been sent to a country which lay in close proximity to such major industrial and cultural centre as Leningrad. What did this virtual occupation of Finland by German troops mean? According to information obtained by the Soviet Union, the German troops were not going to move to Norway. On the contrary, they were strengthening their positions along the Soviet border. Therefore the Soviet government insisted on the immediate withdrawal of the German troops from Finland.

Now, twenty-four hours after this question had first been put to him, Hitler could no longer excuse himself by lack of knowledge of the situation. Nevertheless, he continued to claim without producing a scrap of evidence in support of what he said that the military units were in transit to Norway. Then, resorting to another old ploy of using attack as the best form of defence, Hitler declared that the Soviet Union allegedly presented a threat to Finland.

"A conflict in the Baltic", he said, "would put a heavy strain on German-Russian relations."

"But," replied Molotov, "the Soviet Union does not intend to disturb the peace in this region and presents no threat to Finland. Our only concern is to guarantee peace and genuine security in this region. The German government should bear this in mind if it is interested in normal relations with the Soviet Union."

Hitler declined to reply to this directly, reiterating that the measures that were being taken were intended to ensure the security of Norway and that a conflict in the Baltic might have "far-reaching repercussions". This now sounded like a threat which the Soviet representatives could not leave unchallenged.

"This position," said Molotov, "seems to introduce a new

factor into the talks, which could seriously complicate the situation."

This made it quite clear to Hitler that the Soviet Union intended to insist on its demands for the withdrawal of German troops from Finland.

And there were important reasons why this should be insisted upon. Ruling quarters in Finland at the time had openly declared that they considered the peace concluded with the Soviet Union in March 1940 as just a truce, a respite to be used for preparing for another war against the Soviet Union when they would fight together with Nazi Germany.

According to information obtained by the Soviet Union the Ryti-Tanner government of Finland had in October 1940 signed an agreement with Berlin concerning the stationing of German troops on Finnish territory. At the same time a campaign had been launched in Finland to recruit men who would be sent to Germany for the subsequent formation of a "Finnish SS battalion."

All these preparations gave grounds to think that with the complicity of the Finnish rulers Hitler intended to use Finland as a launching pad for his operations against the Soviet Union. Indeed, when Germany did attack the Soviet Union an army of four German and two Finnish divisions was concentrated in the north of Finland with the aim of occupying Murmansk. At the same time the Karelian and the South-East Finnish armies comprising 15 infantry divisions (one of which was German) and one cavalry and two infantry brigades were deployed south of the Oulujärvi Lakes to the Gulf of Finland. By moving towards Leningrad and the River Svir these armies were to aid the German Army Group "North" in capturing that city. When Hitler broke off the treaty and invaded the USSR the German troops and the Finnish "brothers-in-arms" crossed the Soviet border from Finnish territory...

But let us return to the talks in the Reichskanzlei. The question of the German troops stationed in Finland had produced a heated argument which neither Hitler nor his cronies had counted on. Ribbentrop, considering evidently that it was necessary to relax the situation, tried several times to get a word in, but he could not bring himself to actually interrupt Hitler. He kept getting up from his chair to draw attention to himself. Finally

Hitler noticed his Reichsminister's agitation and with a wave of the hand indicated that he could say his piece.

"Please permit me, my Führer, to express a thought on this matter," he began.

Hitler nodded to him, took a large handkerchief from his pocket and wiped it across his upper lip. Ribbentrop continued:

"There is actually no reason at all for making an issue of the Finnish question. Perhaps it was merely a misunderstanding."¹ Hitler took advantage of this remark to change the subject. He made yet another attempt to involve the Soviet delegation in the discussion on the division of the spheres of influence.

"Let us turn to cardinal present-day problems," he said in a conciliatory tone. "After England is defeated, the British Empire would be a vast auction of 40 million square kilometres. In this bankrupt estate Russia could get access to the ice-free ocean. Thus far, a minority of 40 million Englishmen had ruled 600 million inhabitants of the Empire. An end must be put to this historical injustice. The states which could be interested in the bankrupt estate should stop controversies over minor issues. It is essential to deal with the problem of the partition of the British Empire without delay. This above all applies to Germany, Italy, Japan and Russia."

Molotov said that he had heard all this the day before and that in the present situation it was far more important to discuss matters that were closer to the problems of European security. Besides the question of German troops in Finland, for which the Soviet government was still awaiting an answer, it would also like to know the plans of the German government regarding Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania. The Soviet government believed that the German and Italian guarantees which had recently been given to Romania were directed against the interests of the USSR and that these guarantees ought to be revoked.

Hitler immediately declared that this demand was impossible. Molotov then asked:

"Then what would Germany say if in view of Moscow's interest in the security of the area adjacent to its south-western bor-

¹ William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich. A History of Nazi Germany*, Secker and Warburg, London, 1960, p. 806.

ders the Soviet Union gave Bulgaria guarantees similar to those which Germany and Italy had given to Romania?"

This statement annoyed Hitler visibly.

"What," he almost screamed in reply, "has King Boris¹ asked Moscow for such guarantees? I know nothing of this. In any case I shall have to consult with Mussolini. Italy is also interested in this part of Europe." And then he added threateningly. "If Germany were by chance looking for sources of friction with Russia, it would find them in any region."

Molotov objected, saying that it was the duty of each state to show concern for the security of its people and for that of its neighbouring friendly countries. This was a fundamental principle of the foreign policy of the Soviet government and it was therefore particularly concerned at the present moment that Bulgaria, a country which had long historical ties with Russia, should retain its independence and not be drawn into any dangerous conflict. In this way Molotov made it quite unambiguously plain to Hitler that the Soviet government defended Bulgaria from the threat of Nazi occupation that was then hanging over it.

Molotov then went on to say that Moscow was most dissatisfied with the delay that had occurred in the deliveries of important German equipment for the Soviet Union. This, he said, was particularly inadmissible since the Soviet side was fulfilling its commitments recorded in Soviet-German economic agreements to the letter. Failure to meet the agreed dates for the delivery of the German equipment had caused the USSR serious difficulties.

Once more Hitler began to prevaricate. He said that Germany was fighting a "life and death" struggle with England and that it mobilised all its resources for the final battle against the British.

"But we've only just been told," said Molotov, "that England has to all intents and purposes been vanquished. So which side is fighting for "life" and which "for death"?"

A tense silence reigned in the room. Ribbentrop fidgeted in

¹ King Boris of Bulgaria died subsequently under mysterious circumstances. Returning home by air from Berlin, where he had had talks with Hitler, King Boris died suddenly when he was given an oxygen mask. It is thought that agents of the Gestapo were responsible for his death, having introduced a fast-acting poison into the mask.

his arm-chair and looked anxiously at Hitler. Then he shifted his gaze to his hands which were lying on the table in front of him. His fingers were shaking slightly. Hilger, sitting up straight, frozen in his arm-chair. Schmidt stopped writing but remained fixedly bent over his papers. Evidently they were all expecting a hysterical outburst from Hitler. The latter, however, retained control of himself and even began speaking as if he had not noticed the irony in Molotov's words, but his voice could scarcely restrain his annoyance.

"Yes, that is true," he said, "England has been vanquished. But there are still a few things left to do..."

Then Hitler declared that he thought the subject of their meetings had been exhausted and that since in the evening he would be occupied with other matters, Reichsminister Ribbentrop would conclude the talks.

Thus ended the last meeting of the Soviet delegation with Hitler. It was clear that Hitler gave no thought for the legitimate interests of the Soviet Union which were determined by the interests of Soviet security and of peace in Europe. But that the Hitler government had decided long before the Berlin meeting to attack the Soviet Union and had actually been making preparations for this was, of course, not known.

From the secret archives of the German government, from the diaries of the top Nazis and from the documents of the Nuremberg trials of the Nazi war criminals we now know that even after the conclusion of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact in the autumn of 1939 Hitler continued to plot the invasion of the Soviet Union. Two months after the pact had been signed Hitler instructed the commanders of his armed forces as to look upon the areas of Poland that were under German occupation as a bridgehead for future German operations. A direct reference to this was contained in an entry dated October 18, 1939, in the diary of General Halder, Chief of Staff of the German Land Forces.

On November 23, 1939, Hitler made a lengthy speech to his generals about the new operations in the West. In the same speech he also touched upon an operation against the Soviet Union. There he stated: "We can oppose Russia only when we are free in the West."¹

¹ William L. Shirer, *Op. cit.*, p. 657.

At that time Hitler had made invasion of the Soviet Union contingent upon victory in the West, that is the defeat of Britain. But as to a war against the Soviet Union, he had already made up his mind. According to an entry in the diary of General Jodl, Chief of the General Staff of the German Army, even before his campaign in the West Hitler had announced his decision to attack the Soviet Union in the spring of 1941. On July 29, 1940, at a conference attended by members of the armed forces' command Hitler declared without any of his former provisos that he intended to invade the Soviet Union in the spring of 1941. What is more, he even seemed to be inclined to attack the USSR even before Britain had been finally defeated. On July 31, 1940, at a meeting with Wehrmacht representatives at his residence in Berghof Hitler announced his decision to postpone the invasion of the British Isles.

"Britain's hope," Hitler said, "lies in Russia and America. If that hope in Russia is destroyed, then it will be destroyed for America too because elimination of Russia will enormously increase Japan's power in the Far East. . . . But if Russia is smashed, Britain's last hope will be shattered."¹

It was decided, General Halder wrote in his diary, summing up the results of that meeting, that in order to solve the problem, "Russia must be liquidated. Spring, 1941. The sooner Russia is smashed, the better".²

After this meeting, that is three months before the Berlin talks between Hitler and Molotov, preparations were begun in secret for the invasion of the Soviet Union. The threat that had hung over Britain was past.

Thus the very fact of the existence of such a powerful socialist state as the Soviet Union averted the danger of a German invasion of Britain. Hitler decided to finish the Soviet Union off and then destroy Britain. But there he made his big mistake. The heroic resistance put up by the Soviet people to Nazi aggression and the subsequent collapse of the Third Reich buried these plans once and for all.

Thus Hitler was playing a double game. Having already decided to attack the Soviet Union, he nevertheless wanted to win

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 798.

² *Ibid.*

time by trying to give the impression that he was ready to discuss with the Soviet government matters relating to the further peaceful development of Soviet-German relations.

Evidently, the Nazis hoped that this objective could also be furthered by holding the Berlin talks in which the German government began to show great interest in the summer of 1940.

In the correspondence that during those months was carried on between Berlin and Moscow the Germans hinted that it would be a good idea to discuss urgent problems by high-ranking representatives of both countries. In one of the German letters it was pointed out that since Ribbentrop's last visit to Moscow important changes had taken place in Europe and the world and it would therefore be desirable for a plenipotentiary Soviet delegation to come to Berlin for talks. This being the case, the Soviet government, which unerringly stood for the peaceful settlement of international problems, gave a positive reply to the German initiative for the holding of a meeting in Berlin in November 1940.

In Ribbentrop's Bunker

In the evening of the same day when the talks with Hitler were over a meeting was held with Ribbentrop at his residence in Wilhelmstrasse. His office, which was considerably smaller than Hitler's, was nevertheless luxuriously furnished. The patterned parquet floor was so shiny that all the objects in the room seemed reflected in it. The walls were hung with old paintings, the windows were framed with rich tapestry curtains, and along the walls bronze and porcelain statuettes stood on stands.

Ribbentrop, who in the presence of Hitler had tried to be in the shade, now showed himself in a completely different light. Here in his own home he played the grandee-aristocrat, but his behaviour could rather be described as over-free than majestic. He was surrounded by a large entourage which included cameramen before whom he posed willingly. During the initial exchange of greetings and general conversation which lasted several minutes Ribbentrop stood up straight in the middle of the room with his arms folded across his chest. Finally, turning to his retinue and to the reporters, he declared:

"Gentlemen, I'm afraid I must ask you all to leave. We have important matters to discuss. I hope you will excuse us..."

Whereupon the whole group bowed and quickly left the room.

Ribbentrop invited those who remained to participate in the talks to sit down at a round table in the corner of the room that was adorned with bronze figures and Greek ornaments. When all were seated he declared that in accordance with the wishes of the Führer it would be useful to summarise the talks and come to some agreement "in principle". Then he took from the breast pocket of his grey-green high-collared tunic a sheet of paper that had been folded four times. He unfolded it slowly and said:

"Here in outline are a few of the proposals of the German government..."

With the sheet in front of him Ribbentrop read out the proposals it contained. They boiled down to the same bombastic assertions about the inevitable collapse of Great Britain and the need to start thinking about the subsequent reorganisation of the world. In this context the German government proposed that the USSR should join the pact that had been concluded between Germany, Italy and Japan. Furthermore, Germany, Italy, Japan and the Soviet Union should undertake to respect each other's interests. All four powers should also undertake not to lend their support to any group of powers that was directed against any one of the above-mentioned countries. All participants in the pact should eventually decide with regard to their mutual interests on the way the world should ultimately be arranged...

Having listened to this statement, Molotov said that there was no point in any further discussion of these plans, but he asked if the Soviet delegation could have a copy of the text. Ribbentrop replied that he had only one copy and that he had not really intended to convey these proposals in written form. He put the paper hurriedly back in his pocket.

Suddenly the air-raid siren wailed. We all looked at each other in silence. There came the sound of a dull thump not too far away and the window panes of the office shook.

"It might be dangerous to stay here," said Ribbentrop. "Let's go down to my bunker. It'll be safer there..."

We left his office and made our way down a long corridor to a winding staircase, which led down to the cellars. At the entrance to the bunker an SS man stood on guard. He opened

the heavy door for us and when we were all inside the shelter locked it from the inside.

One of the rooms in the shelter was furnished as Ribbentrop's office. On the polished writing desk there were several telephones, and on one side there stood a round table surrounded by deep, soft arm-chairs.

When the conversation was resumed Ribbentrop once more began to talk about the need to study the question of how to divide the various spheres of influence. There was, he added, every reason to assume that Britain was virtually finished. At this point Molotov interrupted, saying:

"If England is finished, why are we sitting in this shelter? And who is dropping bombs so close that we can hear them even from here?"

This so fazed Ribbentrop that he could make no reply. Instead he called his aide and ordered coffee. When the coffee was brought and the waiter had left, Molotov asked if they would have long to wait for an explanation as to why German troops were in Romania and Finland.

Ribbentrop replied without trying to hide his annoyance that if the Soviet government continued to concern itself with what he called these "inessential questions", they could be discussed through the usual diplomatic channels.

Once more there was silence. There was nothing more to be said, but we were compelled to wait in the bunker, since the British planes continued a massive air attack on Berlin. Again and again we could hear the dull thuds of bombs exploding around us. Dry wine was brought round and the conversation turned to general themes. Ribbentrop spoke about his wineries and asked about the types of wine produced in the Soviet Union. The time dragged on slowly and only late at night could we return to the Bellevue Hotel.

The Nazis' Secret Objectives

What was the point of all Hitler and Ribbentrop's big talk about plans for future cooperation with the Soviet Union? Did the German government at the time really mean that there would be no conflict between Germany and the Soviet Union for a long period of time? Could it be that Hitler really had decided to

abandon for a time the plans for aggression against the Soviet Union, plans that had been proclaimed in his book, *Mein Kampf*? The answer to all these questions was clearly no.

Hitler looked upon the meeting in Berlin as nothing more than a manoeuvre. This can be seen in particular from the secret instruction No 18 which he issued on November 12, 1940, that is just before the arrival of the Soviet delegation in Berlin. The instruction stated: "Political discussions have been initiated with the aim of clarifying Russia's attitude for the time being. Irrespective of the results of these discussions, all preparations for the East which have already been verbally ordered will be continued. Instructions on this will follow, as soon as the general outline of the Army's operational plans has been submitted to, and approved by, me."¹

What Hitler meant by these "preparations for the East" was not too hard to guess.

As for the Soviet Union, its aim was clear. The Soviet government, which consistently pursued a policy of peace, tried to prevent, or at least postpone, a war with Hitler's Germany. The aim was to preserve peace for the Soviet people for as long as possible and gain additional time for strengthening the economic and military might of the socialist state. Furthermore, at that time Hitler's secret intentions were not yet clear and in Moscow the basis for all negotiations with the Germans was to impose peace on Germany if only for some time and to give Hitler no grounds for justifying anti-Soviet aggression. Also of no small importance was the fact that Stalin believed Ribbentrop's signature on the non-aggression pact. This may seem surprising but he believed that Hitler would not venture to start a war.

The Soviet government continued to maintain diplomatic contact with the German government and probe its intentions. On November 26, 1940, that is less than two weeks after the meeting in Berlin, Schulenburg, the German ambassador in Moscow, was informed that for the talks begun in Berlin to continue, the German side should meet a number of conditions, in particular:

German troops must be immediately withdrawn from Finland; the security of the Soviet Union should be ensured by the

¹ W. Shirer, *Op. cit.*, pp. 799-800.

signing within the next few months of a mutual assistance treaty between the Soviet Union and Bulgaria.

Schulenburg promised to forward the Soviet statement immediately on to his government. But no reply was forthcoming from Berlin, and the silence was highly significant. Now we know what lay behind it. Hitler rejected these conditions outright and continued with his preparations for aggression against the Soviet Union. General Halder's diary contains an entry with the following words which were spoken by Hitler apropos of Schulenburg's telegram:

Russia "must be brought to her knees as soon as possible. . ."¹

Hitler ordered his general staff to draw up as quickly as possible a specific plan for the invasion of the USSR. On December 5, after a four-hour-long conference with Field Marshal Brauchitsch, C-in-C, Land forces, and General Halder, Hitler approved the plan. It was then code-named plan "Otto", but this was soon to be changed. On December 18 Hitler signed directive No 21, which was entitled "Operation Barbarossa". The directive began with the following words: "The German Armed Forces must be prepared to crush Soviet Russia in a quick campaign before the end of the war against England. For this purpose the Army will have to employ all available units with the reservation that the occupied territories will have to be safeguarded against surprise attacks. . . Preparations . . . are to be completed by May 15, 1941. Great caution has to be exercised that the intention of an attack will not be recognized."²

Recalling now the course of the Soviet-German talks in Berlin in the autumn of 1940 something must be said of the insinuations which were spread at the time and which even today appear in the Western press in relation to that meeting. It was claimed, for example, that the Soviet delegation to Berlin advanced certain "territorial claims in the general direction of the Indian Ocean" and that, in this connection, the Soviet Union was willing to conclude a "new pact" with Germany. All this is, of course, either the fruit of idle fantasy or deliberate vicious falsification aimed at discrediting the policies of the Soviet state.

And this kind of falsification gets repeated year in, year out,

¹ W. Shirer, *Op. cit.*, p. 810.

² *Ibid.*

with astonishing persistence. To take a recent example, in a speech in April of 1980 to the American Society of Newspaper Editors Zbigniew Brzezinski, then President Carter's National Security Adviser, who was considered to be a prominent historian, spoke extensively of certain new "documentary evidence" which was supposed to show the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean as being "part of long-standing Russian and Soviet imperial aspirations". Here Brzezinski referred to "a secret protocol in a draft agreement between the Soviet Union and the Axis powers" and "an exchange between Molotov and the German Ambassador in Moscow". All this was mentioned in relation to the situation in Afghanistan as "evidence" of Soviet "aspirations in the general direction of the Persian Gulf".

In view of the fact that this blatant attempt to falsify history was immediately seized upon by the American press, I felt it necessary to write a letter to the editor of the *Washington Post* (especially since I was in the US capital at the time). In the letter I explained what really happened during the talks in Berlin in the autumn of 1940 and also during subsequent Soviet-German meetings. As an eye-witness of those far-off events I could testify that the Soviet delegation refused outright to discuss Hitler's proposals for the "division of the wide British estate" and that there had been no agreements or secret protocols signed by the Soviet government. "Distortions of this kind," I said in my letter to *The Washington Post*, "are nothing new. In the early 19th century when Napoleon was preparing a campaign against Russia a paper called the 'Behest of Peter the Great' was fabricated in which he supposedly called upon his descendants to 'reach out for the warm seas'." In conclusion I noted that anyone, particularly an historian, who engages in politics, should be especially careful in his treatment of history.

Needless to say, my letter was not published, which only once more goes to show the hypocrisy of all the talk about the "freedom" and "objectivity" of the bourgeois press. Anti-Soviet insinuations can always find space in the American newspapers, but for the restoration of historical truth there is no room.

The Berlin meeting in 1940 was considered by the Soviet government as an opportunity for sounding the German position and for clarifying the subsequent plans of the Third Reich.

Hitler's position at these talks, in particular his stubborn re-

fusal to consider the natural security interests of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe and his virtual refusal to withdraw German troops from Finland and Romania, showed that despite all the talk about the "global interests" of the Soviet Union, Germany was actually preparing an East-European bridgehead against the Soviet Union. There can be no doubt that Hitler wanted the Berlin meeting so that the talks with the Soviet representatives could be used to subsequently tie the hands of the Soviet government while giving Germany freedom of action, that is freedom to conclude a possible agreement with Britain.

In the light of the above a very interesting incident took place at the end of the second meeting between Molotov and Hitler. As Hitler was accompanying Molotov to the door of his office in the Reichskanzlei, he said:

"Herr Stalin is undoubtedly a great man. An historical personality. I too flatter myself with the hope that I shall go down in history. Therefore, two statesmen like us ought to get together and I am ready for such a meeting to take place as soon as possible."

Molotov simply replied that he would convey the Reichschancellor's proposal to Stalin, and the conversation did not go any further. But, one may ask, what were Hitler's motives? He could not really have imagined such a meeting taking place when all the preparations for invading the Soviet Union were in full swing. Nor could he possibly have intended abandoning his plans at the last moment. Most likely the proposal for a meeting with Stalin was just one more manoeuvre aimed at blunting the vigilance of the Soviet government.

Twists of Fate

The day after the final talks with Ribbentrop the Soviet delegation left Berlin. On the square outside the station the guard of honour was drawn up once more. But the only one of the top Nazis there to see us off was Ribbentrop. We left in a Soviet train which had two German carriages, a restaurant and a saloon carriage, coupled to it. The latter was for representatives of the protocol department of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who accompanied us to the border.

Several hours later the train reached Poznan. Shortly before that I had been called into Molotov's saloon carriage and asked

to translate into German a prepared telegram that would be sent to Hitler in connection with the return home of the Soviet delegation. I was to send this telegram from the Poznan railway station where the train was due to stay 15 or 20 minutes to await a change of engine. Getting off the train I saw that the war-damaged building of the station was quite a long way off and that furthermore there were a number of goods trains on the lines between me and it. On the platform I could make out the silhouettes of tanks and guns standing there covered in green tarpaulin. I had to climb under the trucks and jump across the barely filled-in bomb craters before I finally made it to the station which had been partially gutted by shells. I found the post-office and telegraph which was located in the undamaged part of the station building. The post-office clerk raised his eyebrows in astonishment as he read the text of my telegram, but he said nothing and just took the money and wrote out a receipt. Probably this was the first telegram that had been sent to Hitler at the Reichskanzlei via the ordinary postal service.

When I turned to go the clerk suddenly found his voice and started to say something, but I did not hear him as I was hurrying so as not to miss my train. The engine had already been coupled and next to my carriage I could see our commandant and the station master dressed in his railway uniform with a wide red belt. Just as I put my foot on the steps, the train pulled out.

Back in my compartment I decided to rest for a while, but a few minutes later I was again summoned to Molotov's saloon carriage. As I entered he was sitting at his desk, reading. Looking up he told me to sit down and I perched myself on the edge of a seat by the blacked-out window.

"We've had a little discussion," Molotov began, "and have come to the conclusion that since you have been present at talks with the leaders of the German government, there is no point in your returning to work at the Commissariat of Foreign Trade. What would you say to your being transferred to the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs?"

"That would be a great honour, but I'm afraid I have no specialised training."

"That doesn't matter," replied Molotov, "We've all had to learn different things."

He looked at me carefully and after a short silence said:

"I'll speak to Mikoyan when we get to Moscow. I think he'll agree. You'll be working under me as an adviser on German affairs and as an interpreter. Possibly also Comrade Stalin will need you when he has talks with the Germans. That's all, you may go."

I returned to my compartment. Sleep was now quite out of the question. What strange twists of fate there are. If someone had told me before that I would be in the diplomatic service and even act as an interpreter for the top leaders in the Soviet Union, I simply would not have believed it. I sat there remembering how it had all begun.

In 1938 I graduated from the Kiev Industrial Institute and went to work as an engineer at the Arsenal Plant, which was famous for its revolutionary traditions. Barely four months later I was called up for active military service and sent to Vladivostok to join the Pacific Ocean Fleet. There I was due to serve for five years—the privileges that had been previously introduced for persons with higher education did not last long and graduates were required to serve the full time like everyone else.

I shall not describe our life in the Navy. Having specialised technical knowledge we worked in the engineering department, but the rest of the time we were just as all the other Red Navy sailors who found themselves under the watchful eye of petty-officer Mishchenko. Actually, he was not that bad. It was just that he was very exacting towards new recruits with higher education, believing that they had to have a strict eye kept on them. And so the weeks passed and we gradually got into a daily routine with duties, extra duties, night alarms, which our petty-officer loved to spring on us, and rare leaves when we could go into town, walk along Lenin Street, admire the beautiful views of the Zolotoi Rog bay or look at the fanciful silhouettes of the hills that lay beyond the town and that stood out so sharply on a winter evening against the amazingly clear Far Eastern skies.

One day in early 1939 the petty-officer called me and said that the next day I was to report to the Pacific Fleet Headquarters. I was so surprised that I could not restrain myself from asking who wanted to see me and why. The petty-officer told me that instead of asking questions I should get my full-dress

uniform ready. This I did, but I could hardly stop wondering what the call was all about. In the several months that I had been in the service I had done nothing that could attract the attention of the commanding officers.

But all my guesswork, as it turned out, was far from the mark. The real reason why I had been summoned was this: not long before I had begun my service all the commanding officers of the Pacific Fleet had been changed and the new C-in-C, Admiral Kuznetsov, his Chief-of-Staff, Captain Bogdenko and the Chief of the Engineering Department, Captain Vorontsov, found that in taking up their commands they were required among other duties to learn English. But, there were no teachers in the town who could be allowed inside the HQ building. So the head of personnel was ordered to find out if any of the servicemen had a knowledge of English and it was this that brought my personal record to their attention.

When I was a child, my parents had made me learn German and English, justly assuming that whatever I should do in my life a knowledge of foreign languages would always be useful. Of course, at the time I had a different opinion on this matter. But no matter how hard I tried to get out of it, I had to study. Even at school I had a good knowledge of both languages and then when I left it at 16 I attended special three-year evening classes in English, German and Spanish. I chose Spanish because there was a war going on in Spain and all my friends dreamed of joining the International Brigade. As it turned out, I never went to Spain, but my knowledge of German and English played a decisive role in my life.

At the appointed time, my uniform cleaned and ironed, I reported to the HQ. I was amazed at the corridors there which were all faced with dark-oak paneling and laid with thick, soft carpets. I was also pleasantly surprised by the polite and dignified manner of the guards who checked my pass and the spacious office of the chief-of-staff which was hung with maps. As I crossed the threshold I was full of excitement. I had the feeling that I was entering on some mysterious and alluring journey...

As I entered the office the slightly stout, but still young captain got slowly to his feet from behind his desk. This was Bogdenko, Chief-of-Staff of the Pacific Fleet. Next to the table in an arm-chair Captain Vorontsov remained seated. Bogdenko told me

casually to stand at ease and then invited me to sit down in the vacant arm-chair. Then, taking a yellow file from the table, he began to look through it.

"It says here you have a good command of English," he began. "Is that true?"

"Yes, sir!"

"When did you learn it and where did you graduate from?"

I explained to him.

Bogdenko started looking through the file again. He took from his tunic pocket a carefully folded handkerchief and wiped his upper lip. Then he said:

"Could you teach English?"

"I don't know. I never have taught it. I'm an engineer by profession."

"We know that, but you probably remember how you were taught."

"Yes, I do".

"So you could probably teach others the same way."

"Well, I've never had to teach, but if it's an order, I can try".

"That's another matter. The point at the moment is that the C-in-C, the chief-of-staff and the chief of the engineering department are required to learn English—on the other side of the ocean we've got the United States. Do you realise what that means?"

"I do, Comrade Captain."

"We want you to teach us English."

"Aye-aye, sir!" I replied and stood at attention.

"Sit down," said Vorontsov. "Let's discuss the details."

They told me that each lesson would last two academic hours and there would be two such lessons per week. For each academic hour I would receive 25 roubles. My commanding officer would be instructed to give me time off to work in the town library where I would prepare for my lessons.

When I left the HQ building I was floating on air. This was undoubtedly something unbelievable that had happened in my life, I thought as I went back. Henceforth I would no longer be totally dependent on my petty-officer and furthermore I would have a bit of money in my pocket. This was very important since all we got in the navy was 12 roubles per month.

I began to prepare for lessons seriously. Of course, I was helped by a good knowledge of the language and the fact that I had not forgotten how I was taught myself. Furthermore, my pupils were serious and diligent. Things went well and I was soon able to buy a camera which made me popular among the other sailors. All in all, life could not be better, but, unfortunately, nothing lasts forever.

Admiral Kuznetsov was appointed People's Commissar of the Navy. He left for Moscow and shortly afterwards was followed by both Bogdenko and Vorontsov. The new C-in-C apparently had no time to learn English, or at any rate I was no longer required. Once again I was under the control of the petty-officer who didn't fail to make up for lost time with a lot of extra duties. Life went on as before with only the occasional service trip to the picturesque Russky Island. Sometimes on leave in the hot weather I was able to go to the place known as 19th Kilo-metre where there was a fine beach.

But summer in the Far East is changeable and passes rapidly. It was soon replaced by the autumn of 1939 which brought with it the thunder clouds of the Second World War. Events followed each other with astounding rapidity and millions watched them with alarm. The talks that had been going on for many months between Britain, France and the Soviet Union ended without result. Then there was the non-aggression pact between the Soviet Union and Germany which was immediately followed by the Soviet-German trade agreement. This also included deliveries for our Navy and required people who knew German. There was no question of training special personnel because time was pressing. The obligations incurred under the trade agreement had to be fulfilled as soon as possible, especially since after the German invasion of Poland and the British and French declaration of war on Germany the international situation deteriorated considerably. Thus the personnel department of the People's Commissariat of the Navy started looking hard for people who knew German. At this point one of my former "pupils" from Vladivostok remembered me and that I knew German as well as English, for I suddenly received orders to go to Moscow and report to the GHQ of the People's Commissariat of the Navy.

The journey from Vladivostok to Moscow on the Trans-Siberian express took ten days then—which was more than enough

time for thinking about things. But however much I tried to guess what awaited me, I could never imagine a hundredth part of that which actually did happen.

In early spring, 1940, the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade sent a purchasing commission to Germany headed by I. T. Tevosyan, then People's Commissar for the Shipbuilding Industry. The commission included many prominent figures in Soviet industry as well as military experts and scientists. I too was included in the commission. It was my first trip abroad and I found it full of interest. We visited Berlin, I remember, and many other towns as well.

Tevosyan had his own translator, a woman who knew German very well. But once during talks with the management of a German company in Essen the conversation turned to technical details and some difficulty was experienced in translating the technical terminology. I offered my services and the problem was soon sorted out. Tevosyan praised me and then took me with him as a translator on a trip around Germany. We visited the submarine base at Kiel and the shipyards at Bremen and Hamburg. In early April we went to Holland where refrigerator ships were being built for the Soviet Union.

In Holland we learned that the Wehrmacht had invaded Denmark and Norway. The situation in Western Europe had deteriorated and Tevosyan was urgently recalled to Moscow. But many of the members of the purchasing commission remained in Germany to complete the deals and observe their fulfilment. I was sent to the Krupp factories in Essen. There, together with other Soviet specialists, I received the equipment that had been ordered from the Germans in accordance with the trade agreement. After the Germans occupied Holland and Belgium in May, I was instructed to accompany Kormilitsyn, the deputy trade representative of the USSR in Berlin, on a trip around these countries to check on the condition of the ships and other equipment that was being manufactured there in accordance with orders placed by the USSR. Many of the Dutch and Belgian towns were terrible to look upon and they were still smoking after the barbaric attacks of the Luftwaffe.

Back in Berlin I received an urgent call to return to Moscow and report to the Secretariat of the People's Commissar of Foreign Trade, Anastas Mikoyan. It turned out that Tevosyan had

mentioned me to Mikoyan, and since important trade talks were due to take place in Moscow with the Germans it was decided that I should participate as a specialist who knew German. I thus became an adviser at the Secretariat of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade on matters concerned with Germany. My duties at this new post included translating at talks between the People's Commissar and German representatives.

But I was not destined to stay here for long. Shortly after the November holiday I was called at about three o'clock in the morning—we used to work through the night in those days—by Mikoyan himself. I went to his office where he told me I had to report immediately to the Secretariat of the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars.

"My car is waiting for you below," he said. "Use it so as not to waste time getting a pass. Go through the Spassky Gates right to the Council of People's Commissars' building. They are waiting for you there, so get going."

Without any questions I quickly left his office and ran down the staircase. A few minutes later I was standing in one of the long corridors of the Kremlin in front of a tall oak door on which was a plate bearing the inscription in gold letters: "Reception Room of the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR". I hesitated a bit before opening the door.

In the reception room I was met by S. P. Kozyrev, who was then an assistant of the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs. He courteously offered me a seat and then went through a door leading into the next room. About five minutes later he came out and said: "Comrade Molotov will see you now."

Entering the room I saw Molotov bending over his desk. I stopped, not knowing whether to go any nearer or not. Then he looked up from his work and I saw the face that was very familiar to me from the portraits, with its brown, slightly screwed up eyes. He pointed to an arm-chair that was near his desk and invited me to sit down.

"Mikoyan has spoken about you. He says that you can cope with the work of an interpreter. Tomorrow a government delegation of which I am in charge is going to Berlin for important talks with the German government. We think you will be of use to us, especially since you have some experience of working in Germany and of living among the Germans. Do you agree?"

"I serve the Soviet Union," I said. I could think of no better reply than the one used by Soviet servicemen.

"Very well, you may go. . ."

Molotov rose from his arm-chair, held out his hand and smiled slightly.

The following morning I received a diplomatic passport and at TsUM (the Central Department Store) I was given a dark suit, a dark-grey light overcoat and a wide-brimmed trilby hat. This dress was *de rigueur* for all members of the delegation. I also took a few clothes with me that I had bought during my earlier stay in Berlin. Thus began my diplomatic career.

The work of an interpreter at high-level inter-governmental talks, like all other diplomatic functions, requires an extremely broad general knowledge, and I had to read a lot and improve my education so as to fill in the gaps that were inevitable in someone who had graduated from an engineering institute. I benefited a lot from contact with my colleagues who had special training and diplomatic experience. I recall with gratitude my friendship with our political attache in Berlin, I. S. Chernyshev who had a thorough knowledge of the history of international relations, and the long conversations I had with V. S. Semyonov, who on the eve of the war was the counsellor of the Soviet embassy in Berlin. I was also greatly helped by Ya. Z. Surits, G. N. Zarubin and also K. A. Umansky (who, soon after his return from Washington where he had held the post of ambassador, took charge of the press department of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs in the early months of the war). Frequently late at night, when I had finished work, I would call on him and we would talk about all sorts of interesting, and as far as I was concerned, instructive things relating either to history or current affairs.

Berlin on the Eve of the War

New Year's Eve in the Grünewald

Soon after returning to Moscow I was sent to work at the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs as an adviser on matters relating to Germany. At that time there was a noticeable lull in Soviet-German relations. The German ambassador, Schulenburg had almost no contact with Soviet representatives, except

to make requests for such things as the whereabouts of German graves in various parts of the USSR and for other matters which were most likely suggested by military intelligence in the hope of clarifying data relative to projected theatres of war. Naturally, "curiosity" of this kind was met with evasive replies or simple refusals. In November Ambassador Shkvartsev was replaced by Dekanozov but nothing important came from our embassy in Berlin either, as far as official relations were concerned. Here the atmosphere was cool.

Meanwhile from reports carried in the Western press and communications from Soviet diplomats it became clear that the German government was doing all it could to gain new allies and draw them into the three-power pact. One after another there came reports of the signing of treaties and agreements as the reactionary rulers of Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria bent their heads before Hitler. Berlin was hastening to fortify its positions in South-East Europe.

In late December I was given the post of first secretary at our embassy in Berlin. V. N. Pavlov, who had held this post, was being recalled to Moscow to take up an appointment in the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. The choice fell to me, as I was told, because I had taken part in the November meetings with Hitler and Ribbentrop and was therefore *au courant* with the current affairs.

In the afternoon of December 31 I arrived at Friedrichstrasse Station in Berlin. Quarters had been arranged for me at our embassy in the Unter den Linden. The building dated back to the early 19th century and had lost none of its original appearance (it was destroyed during the bombing at the end of the war). The great halls of the embassy and the winter garden with its exotic plants were heated by air-stoves, but the living quarters had huge white glazed-tile stoves. My room was warm and comfortable.

That evening I decided to take a walk around the town and then for lack of a better alternative to see the New Year in one of the local bierkellers. But down in the vestibule I bumped into an old acquaintance of mine, who invited me to join him.

"There's a whole crowd of us going to the Grünewald. Our naval attache, Admiral Vorontsov, has a big house there. It'll make a nice evening."

This was a much better than sitting all evening in a smokey bierkeller, so I readily accepted the invitation. Furthermore, it gave me the opportunity of meeting many of my new colleagues. Besides I knew the master of the house well from the days of my service in the Pacific Fleet back in 1938-1939.

Like all the houses in Berlin during the blackout, that of our naval attache looked deserted. But inside it was bright and warm and there were lots of people. The hostess, a tall, well-proportioned brunette, brought each new arrival a glass of vodka to warm him as he stood there shivering from cold and damp Berlin weather. And a few of the guests had evidently managed to get this procedure repeated, for soon it became quite noisy. Everyone felt relaxed. Awaiting the guests in the next room was a long banqueting table covered with food.

The radio was tuned to Moscow. A few minutes before midnight our President Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin wished the Soviet people a Happy New Year. We sat down at the table and from all round came the popping of champagne bottles being opened... Everyone seemed to have forgotten their daily cares and worries. People were making jokes which were accompanied by bursts of laughter. We wished each other a Happy New Year and drank to the hope that 1941 would be another year of peace for the Soviet Union. We had no idea then that this new year would see the Soviet people plunged in the worst and most bloody war in their history. On that night the war seemed a long way away. There were no British air-raids and it was about six o'clock in the morning when we took our leave and went home.

Diplomatic Receptions

The grand reception that the German government usually arranged for the diplomatic corps on the first day of the new year was cancelled this time "because of the war". Instead, on January 1 diplomats accredited in Berlin put their signatures in a special book in the Reichskanzlei where in the name of the Reichschancellor they were welcomed by Hans Lammers, the tall, dry, thin-as-a-rake Head of the Reichskanzlei.

But among the embassies in Berlin the number of receptions

did not lessen. The diplomats tried to take any opportunity to meet with their colleagues and exchange information, rumours and forecasts for the future. And in the first months of 1941 rumours in Berlin were rife. They mainly centred around the future course of the war. Who would be the next victim of German aggression? When was the invasion of Britain due to begin? When would the United States enter the war? What was Japan up to? Would Swedish and Turkish neutrality be violated? Would the Germans take the oil-producing regions of the Middle East? All these and other questions were the subject of arguments, guesses, forecasts and gossip.

At big receptions any new rumour would sweep through the guests with lightning speed, although it was passed on as "strictly secret". Here one could come face to face with the big industrial magnates, top-ranking Nazis, famous film stars like Olga Chekhova, Pola Negri and Willi Forst. Such receptions were always noisy and full of people and to cross the hall you had to squeeze your way through the crush and sometimes even use your elbows. But most of the conversation was society talk.

Far more interesting were the smaller gatherings where each of those present tried to learn the latest sensational news, which often was not worth the trouble.

One of those who particularly liked to spread the "latest news" was the Turkish Ambassador Husrev Gerede, although he never insisted on the authenticity of his information and usually added something to the effect that he could not vouch for the truth of what he had said, but as anything was possible he had decided to pass on his interlocutors such and such a piece of information in strict confidence.

Ambassador Gerede was a tall, dandyish man with thick, dark eyebrows and a big nose. He would always offer aromatic Turkish coffee, which was so thick that you felt as if your spoon could stand up in the cup, Turkish delight and a famous Izmir liqueur. He was exceptionally talkative, and often a meeting with him developed into his monologue. On the wall in his office was a map of the Middle East, and one of his favourite topics was the analysis of various ways which the Germans might employ to seize the oil-producing regions of Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

"Turkey," Gerede would begin, "declared more than once that it will never allow German troops to pass through its ter-

ritory. If Germany tries anything of this kind, we shall resist, and they know it. . ."

"So they have already made such a proposal to you?"

"Don't put words into my mouth! I didn't say that. It's just that they know we won't let them through. But they desperately need fuel for their tanks, their planes and their submarines. Obviously they'll have to send in the paras to take Mosul. And for that they need bases—Greece, the Aegean islands, Egypt. If the Germans make a landing in Iraq, Turkey will be in a vice. And then things will be very difficult for us, very difficult. . ."

"Do you mean that in such a situation Turkey might make concessions to Berlin?"

"I didn't say that. We don't want to quarrel with anyone. The British are our friends; the Germans are our friends. The British say that in order to take Iraq the Germans are ready to demand your consent to let their troops pass through the Caucasus. Of course, this is nonsense. You would never do such a thing. And they won't do anything. You've signed a non-aggression pact with Hitler and I know from competent sources that he has every intention of firmly abiding by it. It's all quite clear. There's no point in the Germans attacking us either. Believe me, they'll now concentrate on Egypt, they'll help Mussolini to take Greece and then they'll land in Iraq. That's what they'll do, for sure. . ."

While thus expounding his idea, Gerede kept going up to the map to try and convince whoever he was talking to that a German landing in Mosul was Hitler's most likely next step. On parting he would always say:

"If you hear anything about German plans in the Middle East, do let me know. It's very important."

But Ambassador Gerede was far from being as simple as he might appear at first sight. He maintained very close contacts with the Nazi leaders and possibly had even agreed with Wilhelmstrasse to help further their misinformation campaign. Talks about forthcoming operations in the Middle East might well serve to divert attention from Berlin's real aims.

Another "character" among the diplomatic corps in Berlin was General Hiroshi Oshima, the Japanese ambassador. Although he was always dressed according to the requirements of diplomatic protocol and even wore a top hat, this could not hide his military bearing. In build he was short and stout and his

speech was so abrupt that it sounded like military orders. The energetic gestures he was always making with his right hand as he spoke gave you the impression that he was cutting down an unseen enemy with a samurai sword.

Oshima made no attempt to hide his sympathy for the Nazis, and the Germans were not slow to exploit this. He was often taken round to see the places where recent battles had been fought in the West and then, on his return to Berlin, never tired of extolling the exploits of the German army among his fellow diplomats. And he was no less enthusiastic about Hitler's "new order" in Europe.

"Hitler knows how to hold in leash the countries he's conquered," Oshima would say. "This is an earnest of the success of the plans for restructuring the world now being worked out by the Axis powers. . ."

In talks with Soviet diplomats Oshima never lost an opportunity to recall that he had once served in the Kwantung army and knew the Far East well. He would go on to expound his idea that it was not necessary for the Soviet Union to maintain large troop formations on the Manchurian border (at the time Manchuria was under Japanese occupation).

"The main events," he would argue, "are now taking place in Europe, and it is there that the main interests of the Soviet Union are focused. But at the same time your attention is also being distracted by the Far East. Considerable material resources and military forces are being assigned to this region. The result is that two large masses of heavily armed troops now confront each other along the Manchurian border, and this is very dangerous. As a military man I know well that when two large armies, equipped with all types of weapons, stand face to face for a long period of time, anything can happen, even if this is not what the political leaders want. One of the two sides may not be able to withstand the tension, an incident will occur and then it will be too late to stop things from getting out of hand. I know the *esprit de corps* of the Soviet Army in the Far East. But the Japanese Kwantung Army's *esprit de corps* is high too. These armies should not be allowed to face each other for any length of time. This is dangerous. I have already written to my government that it would be a good idea to reduce the troop concentrations there and withdraw the troops from the border

region so that they are not in direct contact with the Soviet troops. I should also advise you to express the same idea to your government, so that steps could be taken in this direction as soon as possible. . .”

At every meeting with us Oshima returned to this subject. What was his motive? Perhaps he thought that if his idea were put into practice Japan would be able to release its forces for the operations that Tokyo was then planning in South-East Asia? Or perhaps he was hoping to trick the Soviet Union into weakening its defences in the Far East so that at a suitable moment Japan could suddenly attack the Soviet Union? In any case it is difficult to believe that Oshima seriously thought his rather primitive agitation might be successful. But he never tired of propagandising his plan for the mutual withdrawal of troops in the Far East despite its unreality and even naivety given the situation at the time. As for discussion of Hitler's future military actions he tended to evade any kind of involvement in this, although he undoubtedly knew more about them than other members of the diplomatic corps.

I should also like to mention a meeting with Andrić, the Yugoslav Envoy, which I remember particularly well. His residence was in the Tiergarten, a new district which had been assigned to diplomatic representatives, and was still not completely built up. The pompose building of the Italian embassy was almost ready and work was coming to an end on the Japanese mission. But the house where the Yugoslav legation was located and its grounds were already completed. It was designed by architects from Belgrade, and its severe lines and modern decor and furnishings made a very pleasant impression.

The meeting with Andrić took place in early April. The Nazi newspapers at the time had launched a furious anti-Yugoslav campaign. Every day *Völkischer Beobachter* and other papers wrote about “persecutions” of the German minority in Serbia. There were photographs showing groups of “refugees” or, as they were described in the articles, “the victims of Yugoslav terror”. In actual fact, of course, no one was persecuting the Germans in Yugoslavia—it was all just typical Nazi provocation. Incidents in Yugoslavia and the flight of German citizens from that country were specially organised by Nazi agents. On the pretext of “protecting” the German minority Hitler intended to

invade Yugoslavia. And, indubitably, the main objective he pursued in invading "recalcitrant" Yugoslavia was to secure his rear in South-East Europe before invading the Soviet Union.

At the end of March the Yugoslav government under Cvetković had signed a document in Vienna, allying Yugoslavia to the Axis powers. Immediately afterwards there had been a coup in Belgrade, and although the government of General Simović had proposed the conclusion of a non-aggression pact with Berlin, Hitler, no longer trusting Belgrade, decided to occupy the country and at the same time help Mussolini to deal with Greece.

Andrić, who was always restrained and outwardly calm, could not now hide his agitation. He understood what the Nazis were after and that any day now his country would be invaded.

"What do they want from us?" he said bitterly. "We don't interfere with them. All this stuff about the 'persecution' of the German minority is a put-up job from beginning to end. All we want is for them to leave us alone. But what they've grabbed in Europe is no longer enough for them. They're already out for our blood. They're wrong if they think they can get away with it. Our people won't give in. We won't stop fighting even if they succeed in occupying our country. They'll pay dearly for it. . ."

There was general indignation in Yugoslavia at Hitler's provocations. Measures were hastily taken to resist the Nazi aggressor. On April 5, a Soviet-Yugoslav treaty of friendship and non-aggression was signed in Moscow, which gave rise to an outburst of hysteria among Nazi quarters in Berlin. But, of course, it was too late for the Soviet Union to give practical aid to the Yugoslav people. On the night of April 5, German troops treacherously invaded Yugoslavia, spreading death and destruction in their path.

The Yugoslav envoy's words turned out prophetic. His people did not submit. They fought as partisans and did more and more damage to the Nazi invaders. . .

Towards the end of April I was invited to cocktails by Mr. Patterson, the First Secretary of the United States embassy in Berlin. He was reputed to be a very rich man and rented at his own expense a luxurious three-storey building in Charlottenburg where he could easily invite twenty or thirty people to dinner or throw a cocktail party for three hundred.

Since Patterson lived fairly far from the city centre and his

guests usually departed late, I took a car from our embassy garage. Because of the blackout it was always pitch-dark in Berlin at night, but that evening the moon was shining and with my wing lights switched off I was able to drive through the deserted streets. Berlin looked like a ghost city on some unknown planet. I soon arrived at Patterson's house outside which stood a whole line of cars.

In the large drawing-room there were a lot of people and it was difficult at first to make out all those present, for the room was lit only by a cheerfully burning fire in the fire-place and a few dim wall lamps. When my eyes got used to the gloom I noticed that the guests were standing around in groups, holding their glasses and chatting convivially.

After welcoming me to the party, Patterson said:

"There's a man here I'd like to introduce you to. . ."

He led me to the fire-place where a tall, lean officer in Luft-waffe uniform, a glass of whiskey in his hand, stood talking to a number of American diplomats I knew. His tanned face stood out among the other guests.

"Let me introduce you", said Patterson. "The major has just come back from Africa on leave. . ."

The major was evidently an experienced military pilot. He spoke readily about operations in Western Europe and North Africa, and made no attempt to hide the fact that despite all the over-optimistic reports from the Wehrmacht GHQ the Germans were far from having things all their own way in the fighting in Africa. It seemed a little strange to me that a German officer should behave so freely in the house of an American diplomat, but possibly this was because he had known Patterson for a long time. From some of the remarks made I got the impression that they had met in the United States before the war.

Towards the end of the evening I happened to find myself alone with the German major. Smoking his cigar he looked straight at me and said, slightly lowering his voice:

"Patterson wants me to tell you something. You see, I'm not on leave at all. My squadron had been withdrawn from North Africa and yesterday we received orders to move east, to the Lodz area. It is possible that does not mean very much, but I happen to know that many other units have recently been transferred to your borders. I don't know what this could mean, but

I personally would not want anything to happen between our two countries. I am telling you this confidentially of course."

This was such unprecedented thing that for a moment I was at a loss: an officer of the Hitler Wehrmacht passing information on to a Soviet diplomat, which, if true, would undoubtedly be classified as top secret. He was risking his life. On the other hand, it could be some sort of provocation. In any case, I was not sure how far he could be trusted, and so I decided to answer in a restrained and fairly stereotyped manner. I thanked him for the information, which was very interesting, but, I said, I assumed that Germany would observe the non-aggression pact.

"As for the Soviet Union," I said, "it wants peace to be maintained between us. So let us hope for the best..."

"Well, as you wish. You know better, I suppose," the major smiled. Soon after that he said his good-byes and left.

Of course, this information, like everything else that was of interest in our conversations at diplomatic receptions, was included in a regular embassy report that was telegraphed to Moscow.

Daily Life at the Embassy

Our contacts with the political leaders of the Third Reich were entirely of an official character and were extremely limited. Of the top Nazis only Ribbentrop, and then not always, attended receptions at our embassy. Sometimes field marshals Keitel and Milch came, but they usually did not stay long, saying they were busy. Only two persons came to us regularly: the Staatssekretär, Otto Meissner, a man of the "old school" (he had held this post under Hindenburg) and one that was considered close to Hitler, and a certain Baron von Tschaikowski, whose visiting card described him as a "retired diplomat". Although the latter held no official post, he had the reputation of being highly informed and trusted in the Wilhelmstrasse. Both Meissner and von Tschaikowski were always talking about the need to improve Soviet-German relations. If one was to believe their words the German government thought of nothing else but of making relations between our two countries closer and more sincere.

At a lunch in the embassy in early June 1941, that is some two weeks before the outbreak of the war, Meissner hinted that

the Reichskanzlei was working out some new proposals for strengthening Soviet-German relations, which the Führer intended shortly to present to Moscow. This, of course, was nothing but pure misinformation. Meissner and von Tschaikowski were out to blunt the vigilance of Soviet people.

A number of German businessmen, however, did maintain close contacts with the embassy. We were frequently visited by the directors of such firms as AEG, Krupp, Mannesmann, Siemens-Schuckert, Rheinmetall-Borsig, Zeiss-Ikon and Telefunken. Our representatives were also invited to visit their factories in various parts of Germany. I personally went to the Krupp plants at Essen, to the shipyards at Bremen and to the Mannesmann factory at Magdeburg. Of course, the Soviet diplomats were shown only a part of what the factories were producing.

It is also quite likely that some of these visits were specially organised as part of Hitler's misinformation campaign. But I am sure that many of the industrialists we spoke to really did believe that the Soviet Union and Germany could do much to supplement each other economically and that the development of trade would be to the good of both.

A frequent guest at the Soviet embassy was a certain Herr Gaspar, one of the directors of the Mannesmann Company. He was a tall, elegantly dressed man of middle age. In his button-hole he always wore a red carnation and he used to say that his nickname was "red Gaspar", assuring us that this was not so much to do with the red carnation as with his political convictions which he described as "extreme left". Gaspar could permit himself this kind of extravagance, inasmuch as he was a very rich man and had great weight in the business world.

At the time the Soviet Trade Mission had put in an order for Mannesmann to supply a large consignment of steel pipes, which was one more proof for the directors of the firm that it was possible to do big business deals with the USSR.

During one of his visits to the embassy Gaspar said that he wanted very much for relations between the USSR and Germany to develop favourably. His own company, he said, was sincerely interested in this. But, unfortunately, there were forces in Germany that did not understand where the true interests of their country lay. And they could, he said, bring the country to the brink of catastrophe once again. . .

Gaspar, incidentally, was one of those few businessmen in the Third Reich who warned us of the danger that threatened us and of the need for vigilance and caution, although he said nothing concrete about Hitler's forthcoming attack on the Soviet Union.

We tried to utilise the temporary normalisation of relations with Nazi Germany to free a number of progressive writers, scientists, prominent anti-fascists and communist leaders from the clutches of the Gestapo. Both in Berlin and in Moscow the Germans frequently approached us to allow various persons to return to the Reich. Some of these people were particularly needed by the Germans, and in those cases where the Soviet authorities considered it possible to satisfy the German request, we made counter-requests for persons whom we wanted to be allowed to go to the Soviet Union. In this way many anti-fascists, including former International Brigade fighters in Spain that had been captured by the Nazis in France, were released.

However, these efforts at times took months and were not always successful. For instance, we never managed to get the Germans to agree to allow Paul Langevin, the world-famous French physicist, to leave for the USSR. There was every reason to fear for the life of this prominent progressive scientist. In 1935 Langevin had been a member of the Popular Front in France and had been elected an honorary member of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. He had never attempted to conceal his anti-fascist views.

For this the Germans never forgave him. In response to our numerous requests the German ministry of foreign affairs alleged at first that he could not be found. Then it frankly stated that since Langevin had been engaged not only in science but also in activity that was "hostile to Germany", the authorities refused to hand him over. To try and get his release we even detained a certain character whose exit from the USSR was insistently demanded by the General authorities. But even this was no use. Langevin remained in Nazi hands. At the end of 1941 he was arrested and thrown into prison. Later he was sent to Troyes under Gestapo surveillance. His life might have ended tragically had he not been able to escape with the help of resistance fighters and reach neutral Switzerland. After the liberation of France in 1944 Langevin returned to Paris and joined the Communist

party. He died in 1946 and was buried in the Pantheon as a national hero.

But the long talks that our embassy in Berlin conducted in early 1941 with the object of securing the release of Jean-Richard Bloch were successful. I remember how excited I felt when in the spring of 1941 I met Bloch at the Friedrichstrasse Station in Berlin. I can still see in my mind's eye that small terribly thin figure with a brown bag and a plaid in his hand. I remember his high forehead, his expressive eyes and face and his sad smile as he took his first steps to freedom. The Gestapo agent in civilian clothes that handed him over to me asked me to sign a receipt as if he were passing over a piece of baggage. We took Jean-Richard Bloch to the embassy, where a room had been made ready for him. The next day a group of Soviet diplomats saw him off to Moscow from Berlin. He laughed and joked and was happy to be going to the Soviet Union.

Jean-Richard Bloch was a great friend of Romain Rolland and Louis Aragon. He spent the war years in the Soviet Union and did much to mobilise the world progressive public to fight against fascism. He published his passionate diatribes in both the Soviet and the foreign press and frequently appealed on the radio to the resistance fighters to intensify their struggle against the enemy. After the war Bloch returned to France where he died in 1947.

A Box in the Admiralspalast

When the La Scala Opera from Milan visited Berlin in the early spring of 1941 the German foreign ministry arranged a reception to which all the diplomats accredited in Berlin were invited. The La Scala tour happened to coincide with the stay in Berlin of Count Ciano, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, and therefore the reception was attended by Ribbentrop and the Reich's top officials as well as the persons who accompanied Ciano.

The guests were informed that they were to come in tail-coats or full-dress uniforms and the ladies in evening dress. Like the other diplomats from our embassy I was also required to wear a tail-coat. At that time there was no dress uniform for members of the staff of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs and

so all Soviet diplomats arriving in a foreign country were kitted up with tail-coats, top hats, white silk scarves and black cloaks that were fastened with gilded chains, all of which looked very picturesque. It was not until 1944 that we had our own foreign ministry uniform, which, incidentally, is no longer worn.

The reception was due to begin at eight o'clock at the Admiralspalast Theatre, which was on Friedrichstrasse not far from the railway station. The guests certainly looked magnificent, particularly the wives of the Nazi dignitaries. In their décolleté evening gowns, their diamonds and expensive furs they were clearly out to rival each other.

In the centre of the foyer stood Ribbentrop and Ciano, surrounded by men in dandyish, military-style uniforms. The diplomats ascended the broad marble staircase, greeted both ministers and then proceeded into a neighbouring hall, where a large brightly coloured moving circle of guests had formed, among whom waiters skilfully wove their way carrying glasses of champagne on silver trays.

A bell rang and the guests were invited to take their seats. That evening Wagner's *Tannhäuser* was on. We went up to the dress circle where a box had been assigned for the Soviet diplomats. The lights slowly went out and the orchestra struck the first majestic chords of the overture.

But it was not only the fine performance given by the famous La Scala singers that I remember about that evening. During the interval Alfieri, the Italian ambassador, came to our box. This outspoken fascist, who was a bitter enemy of our country, was nevertheless emphatically courteous towards the Soviet diplomats. As it happened, I had remained in the box alone with the Soviet ambassador, and Alfieri came and sat next to me.

"I am very pleased," he began, "to be able to take this opportunity of showing you, Mr. Ambassador, and your colleagues the superb art of our magnificent La Scala. We have heard of the great Russian operatic school and of the wonderful voices of the singers at the Bolshoi Theatre, and I therefore consider it a great honour to be able to present for your strict judgement the art of Italian opera singers."

We politely thanked Alfieri for his kindness and assured him that the performance gave us great pleasure.

The Italian bowed low and said that his country would be

very pleased to welcome the company of the famous Bolshoi Theatre.

"Soon the Axis powers," he continued, "will bring the war to a victorious end and then a new era will begin in relations between our peoples. I consider it most beneficial that everything is going well now. Broad prospects open before us and now is the time for us to think about the development of Soviet-Italian cultural ties so that we can be ready to take advantage of the period that will ensue after the forthcoming victory."

"But in our view," the Soviet ambassador replied, "a speedy end to the war is so far nowhere in sight."

Alfieri was embarrassed; he clearly had not expected such a reaction.

"You should have no doubts about it, Your Excellency," he replied, after a short pause. "Perhaps you have in mind the fact that the Italian army is experiencing some difficulties in Greece and Albania? It is a pity that I haven't seen you for such a long time—I should have visited you and explained the situation. The point is that there are considerable forces in both Italy and Germany which are getting ready to strike a blow at England and its positions in the Middle East. And I can tell you in confidence that this operation has been fully planned and will be put into effect as soon as the way across the Balkans is clear to the oil regions of the Arabian Peninsula. Soon the enormous force that has already been concentrated in the appropriate areas will come down with all its might against the Anglo-Saxons. Believe me there will be nothing left for them but to recognise our victory."

"I'm afraid my understanding of the situation is quite different," said the Soviet ambassador. "Furthermore, there seems to be no indication that considerable forces of the Axis powers are concentrated to strike against England, rather it's the other way round..."

"I suppose you are referring to the transfer of certain units to the east," replied the Italian diplomat in state of obvious embarrassment. "You should have no doubts on this score. We simply want to trick the English and at the same time give our troops the chance of a little rest where things are quiet. After all they have a difficult operation ahead. Anyway, with the modern roads and the dense railway system it won't take long to

get them to the Channel. As for Greece and Albania, they won't last long. Unfortunately I cannot go into detail at the moment, but believe me the way to the oil fields of the Middle East will soon be clear. We'll be celebrating victory this year."

The bell rang and the spectators rapidly began to take their places. Alfieri bowed ceremonially and took his leave. The curtain rose, but I continued to wonder what was the purpose of the Italian ambassador's visit. His hints about Greece and Albania were far too transparent: obviously, Ciano had already come to an agreement with the Germans about the Wehrmacht helping the Italians out of the hopeless mess they were stuck in in the Balkans. But what else? Was Alfieri hoping that his "disclosures" would make an additional contribution to the misinformation campaign that had been intensified by the Nazis as preparations for attacking the Soviet Union were getting underway? Or did the ambassador really suppose that the next country in line would be England? It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that Italian politicians did indeed think that Hitler was wary of invading the Soviet Union as long as England remained undefeated in his rear and was supported by the might of America. After all the more far-sighted Germans had always feared a war on two fronts. Did Rome foresee that Hitler would ignore this danger? The fact is, however, that it was only at the very last moment that Hitler made Mussolini privy to his plans for invading the Soviet Union.

Alarming Signals

Over a period of several months we at the embassy were able to observe how Germany was steadily taking steps that were obviously designed to prepare for operations on the Eastern Front. Information about these preparations reached us from various sources.

First of all there were our friends in Germany itself. In various parts of the Reich and particularly in Berlin we knew that anti-fascist groups like "Die rote Kapelle" continued to function underground. Overcoming immense difficulties and at times risking their lives the German anti-fascists contrived to warn the Soviet Union of the danger that threatened it. They passed on

important information about the preparations being made by the Germans for an attack on the USSR.

In mid-February a German printer came to the Soviet consulate in Berlin with a copy of a Russo-German phrase-book that was being printed in a huge edition. The content of the phrase-book left no doubt as to what it was designed for. For instance, it contained in Latin transcription such phrases in Russian as "Where is the collective farm chairman?", "Are you a Communist?" "Hands up!", "I'll shoot!", "Surrender!". The phrase-book was immediately sent to Moscow.

After the Nazis had occupied Poland only one man, the superintendent Vasilyev, was left at the Soviet embassy in Warsaw. He was responsible for Soviet property throughout the whole territory of the "Generalgouvernement", as the Germans called occupied Polish lands and in this connection he often had to visit areas that lay adjacent to the Soviet border. Whenever he came to Berlin on business Vasilyev naturally informed us of everything he had seen.

Obviously, the Germans tried to restrict his opportunities for movement and in general did everything they could to hide their aggressive military preparations in the East. But Vasilyev could not help noticing that the railways were full of special military trains, that the Polish towns literally swarmed with Wehrmacht soldiers and that the number of troops in Poland was steadily increasing. Vasilyev's observations were supported by information that reached us from other sources.

Every morning the press-attaché (at the time it was A. A. Smirnov until his recall to Moscow when the post went to I. M. Lavrov) would give a brief talk for the diplomatic staff on German and foreign press reports. In the early months of 1941 he increasingly drew our attention to complaints in the German newspapers in connection with foreign press reports alleging that the Soviet Union was making "military preparations" along the German border. It was not difficult to see where this information was coming from. As a rule, it appeared first in the American reactionary press, often with references to German sources in neutral countries. Obviously, what we had here was provocative misinformation that owed its origins to German agents abroad. Having no real facts on which to base their reports about a "Soviet threat" for the simple reason that such facts did not

exist, the Nazi propaganda machine fabricated information about Soviet "military preparations" on its western borders. These totally false reports were then fed through the information agencies and press organs in other countries, so that when they turned up in American and other foreign newspapers the German press could refer to them and sanctimoniously complain that reports of this kind served to "cloud" Soviet-German relations. All this also showed that the German authorities were interested in spreading throughout the world the false idea that the Soviet Union was "threatening" Germany.

At the same time increasingly frequent references to Hitler's book, *Mein Kampf*, were being made in the German press. These references had almost disappeared during the months that immediately followed the signing of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact in 1939. It is true that this gospel of Nazism written by Hitler between 1924 and 1926, had never been called in question in the Third Reich. The book with a photograph of Hitler on the front cover could be seen in the windows of all bookshops and was yearly published in enormous editions, bringing Hitler millions of marks. But now German propaganda began to refer to it more and more often, as it ruminated upon the further plans of "Great Germany".

Mein Kampf outlines Hitler's aggressive aims and plans with particular clarity. It points out that Germany should not simply limit itself to a demand for the restoration of the 1914 borders. The country needed more *Lebensraum*. There were, Hitler stated in the book, some 80 million Germans in Europe, and in less than a century this number would, increase to 250 million. Therefore, he insists, other peoples should make room for them.

Such was Hitler's fundamental premise. And the book is no less clear and direct about the practical steps needed to achieve this "foreign policy" objective. France is referred to as the "mortal enemy of the German nation", but its "destruction" is only one of the conditions for the attainment of Hitler's far-reaching aims. Hitler writes about a "decisive battle" with France, but Germany, he says, should look upon the destruction of France as a means enabling Germany to ultimately expand in another direction. . .

In which direction? To this question also *Mein Kampf* gives a quite unambiguous answer. First, says Hitler, Germany should

take those regions of the East where the German population is predominant—Austria, Sudetenland and Poland's Western provinces, including Danzig.

By 1941 all this had actually been done, although in a slightly different order, but, on the other hand, on a much grander scale. So what was to come next? *Mein Kampf* states it clearly: the invasion of the Soviet Union.

None of these ideas so unequivocally expressed in *Mein Kampf* had ever been refuted or revised by the Nazis. They remained in force and were used by the Nazi propagandists when in the spring of 1941, as if at somebody's command, they began to praise Hitler's gospel. . .

The Hess Affair

In the middle of May Berlin was aroused by the report that Rudolf Hess, Hitler's first deputy in the Nazi party, had unexpectedly flown to England. Hess, who piloted the Messerschmitt-110 himself, left Augsburg in Southern Germany on May 10 bound for Dungavel Castle, the Scottish residence of Lord Hamilton with whom he was personally acquainted. However, Hess had miscalculated the amount of fuel required and 14 kilometres from his destination was forced to bale out near the village of Eaglesham where he was detained by local farmers and handed over to the authorities. For several days the British government maintained silence, as did Berlin. It was only after London had eventually made the flight public, did the German government realise that the secret mission entrusted to Hess has been unsuccessful. Then Hitler's headquarters at Berghof decided that Hess's flight should be presented to the public as evidence of his insanity. The official communiqué stated that Hess, a member of the party, had evidently become obsessed with the idea that through his own personal action he could still achieve mutual understanding between Britain and Germany. In commentaries that were clearly inspired the German press went even further in pointing out that this Nazi leader was a mentally deranged idealist who had hallucinations as a result of wounds received in the First World War. The authors of these commentaries had evidently overlooked the bitter irony contained in the fact that this "madman" had until the day before been the second man in the Nazi party. Moreover, according to Hitler's will, in the

event of his sudden death and the death of Goering, Hess was to become the "Führer of the German nation".

Hitler understood the damage that Hess's unsuccessful flight had done to his own prestige and that of his regime. In a bid to cover up the traces he ordered Hess's associates to be arrested, while Hess himself was removed from all posts he had occupied and sentenced to be shot should he return to Germany. After the fall of Hess, Bormann was appointed to be number two in the Nazi party.

There can be no doubt, however, that Hitler pinned great hopes on Hess's flight. German imperialists believed that they would succeed in getting Germany's enemies, particularly England to join the planned "crusade" against the "Bolshevik menace".

From the documents made available at the Nuremberg Tribunal and other material published after the defeat of Nazi Germany it has been established that from the summer of 1940 Hess was in correspondence with prominent British Munich men. This correspondence was established through the mediation of the Duke of Windsor, who had formerly been King Edward VIII but who was forced to abdicate by reason of his attachment to an American millionairess.

The Duke of Windsor was known for his pro-Nazi sympathies and at one time Hitler had hoped to exploit him in a bid to demoralise the British people and induce the British government to sign a separate peace with Germany. When the Duke of Windsor was on his way to voluntary exile in the Bahamas (he had been appointed governor of the islands) he stopped off in Portugal, where SS Brigadenführer Walter Schellenberg, then head of Department Six of the Main Security Administration of the Reich, had been dispatched to contact him. Schellenberg was instructed to persuade the duke to leave for Berlin and appeal to the British people on German radio to conclude a separate peace with Germany. For this service Hitler offered the duke 50 million Swiss francs. If attempts at persuasion should fail, Schellenberg was to kidnap the duke and bring him to Hitler. However, Hitler's emissary did not succeed in his objective, for the former monarch was closely guarded by the British secret service and Schellenberg was unable even to make contact with him.

But to return to Hess. He used all his connections to fix up

his visit to England. At first this should have taken place in December 1940, but the visit was postponed until Hitler's aggressive operations in South-East Europe had been completed. When Hess finally flew to England in May 1941 and began talks with high-ranking British representatives the situation in that country and in the rest of the world had changed radically; the men of Munich could no longer implement their plans for a deal with the Nazis.

The more far-sighted politicians in Britain and the United States realised that Hitler only wanted a peace with them so as to attack them later at a moment that suited him better. The ruling quarters in Britain then saw clearly the threat presented to British positions and British interests by German imperialism which was trying to subjugate the whole world. Therefore they were wary of any new deals with Germany, the more so since in the past political experiments of this kind had invariably turned to their disadvantage.

Thus, Hess' mission failed. He himself was tried at Nuremberg among the chief Nazi war criminals. However, he managed to escape the gallows—psychiatrists pronounced him mentally deranged—and was sentenced to life imprisonment.

In May 1941 we did not know, of course, all the details of Hess' flight to England. But that it was an attempt to come to an agreement with London against the Soviet Union was indubitable. I recall one significant fact. One day in early May I was at Wilhelmstrasse on my regular business. On some tables in the reception room of the ministry of foreign affairs I saw a number of pre-war magazines and brochures on "Anglo-German friendship" and its importance for the destiny of Europe and the whole world (at the time of the Munich deal the Hitlerites had been nursing this idea). Of course, all the diplomats arriving at the ministry paid immediate attention to these brochures, interpreting their appearance as a gesture towards England. And they gave use to much guesswork, and speculation. The highly suspicious flight of the "insane" Hess, coinciding as it did with this, and the fact that the Germans were intensifying their military preparations on the Eastern front could not but attract considerable attention.

Increasingly alarming news was being received at the time by the Soviet military attaché, General Tupikov, and the naval

attaché, Admiral Vorontsov. According to their information, special military trains carrying troops and equipment had begun to move east from the beginning of February 1941. In March and April there was a continuous stream of tanks, artillery and ammunition going in the same direction so that by the end of May, according to all reports, large German forces and matériel had been concentrated in the border zone.

At the same time the Germans made brazen attempts to test the strength of the defences along the state borders of the Soviet Union. These acts of provocation became particularly frequent at the end of May and in early June. Almost daily the embassy received instructions from Moscow to lodge protests against these violations along the Soviet border. And it was not only the German border guards, but soldiers of the Wehrmacht that made systematic incursions into Soviet territory, opening fire on and killing Soviet border guards. Planes displaying the swastika brazenly flew deep into Soviet territory. All these facts with precise indication of time and place were reported to the German ministry of foreign affairs. At first Wilhelmstrasse promised to investigate the matter, but then only issued statements to the effect that the "informaion has not been confirmed".

Then I recall another significant incident. Not far from the embassy on the Unter den Linden there was a luxurious photographer's studio owned by Heinrich Hoffmann, Hitler's personal photographer. Eva Braun, Hitler's mistress, had once worked there as a model. In one of the windows there was a portrait of Hitler and above the portrait a large map. It became usual from the outbreak of the war onwards for the map to show that part of Europe where the fighting was about to begin or actually took place. Thus in the early spring of 1940 Holland, Belgium, Denmark and Norway were featured. Then for quite a long while the map of France hung there. By early 1941 passers-by could stop and look at the map of Yugoslavia and Greece. And then suddenly, in late May, walking past Hoffmann's studio I was surprised to see a large map of Eastern Europe which included the Baltic states, Byelorussia, the Ukraine—a large part of the Soviet Union from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea. I could not believe it. Without the slightest qualm Hoffmann was indicating where the next theatre of war would be. It was as if he were saying: "Now it's the Soviet Union's turn".

In March rumours began to circulate in Berlin that Hitler was preparing to attack the Soviet Union. Various dates were mentioned, which were evidently intended to confuse us. There were, for example, April 6, April 20, May 18 and, finally, June 22.

Reports of all these alarming signals were regularly transmitted to Moscow by the embassy. In early May a group of our diplomats were requested to put aside all their other job and occupy themselves exclusively with studying, analysing and summarising all the information reaching the embassy relative to Hitler's preparations for war in the East. . .

By the end of May the group, which was headed by the Counsellor V. S. Semyonov and the attaché I. S. Chernyshov, had compiled a circumstantial report, which, incidentally, included relevant quotations from *Mein Kampf*. The main conclusion of the report was that practical preparations had been completed by Germany for an invasion of the Soviet Union. The Soviet ambassador, fearing that such decisive conclusions would not be to the liking of Stalin, decided to tone down somewhat the text of the report. But even so the conclusion was inescapable: Germany was ready to attack the Soviet Union at any moment.

We members of the Soviet embassy staff in Berlin, were puzzled. On the one hand, we possessed unequivocal information that war was about to break out; on the other, nothing really seemed to have happened. The wives and children of persons employed at Soviet organisations in Germany and in the occupied territories were not being sent home. On the contrary, new staff members came almost daily, some with large families and some with wives who were in the advanced stages of pregnancy. Deliveries of Soviet goods to Germany continued, although the Germans had almost completely ceased to fulfil their trade commitments. On June 14 (a week before the German attack on the Soviet Union!) the Soviet press published a TASS communiqué which stated that "according to information received by the USSR, Germany is strictly observing the terms of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact, as is the Soviet Union, in view of which, in the opinion of Soviet circles, rumours of Germany's intentions to break off the pact and attack the Soviet Union are completely unfounded."

By this statement, the text of which was handed to Schulenburg in Moscow, Stalin was obviously trying once more to probe

the intentions of the German government. But whatever foreign policy aims this TASS communiqué had, its publication only eight days before the outbreak of war could only blunt the vigilance of our people. Berlin's only reply to the TASS statement was silence. Not a single German newspaper made any mention of it.

On June 21, only a few hours before Germany's attack, our embassy was instructed to make yet another statement to the German government proposing that the state of Soviet-German relations should be discussed.

The Soviet government informed the German government that it was aware of the concentrations of German forces along the Soviet border and that a military adventure could have dangerous consequences. But the content of the dispatch also indicated something else—Moscow was still hoping to avert a conflict and was ready to hold talks on the situation.

The Night of June 21

On Saturday, June 21, weather was fine in Berlin. The morning promised a hot day, and many of the embassy staff prepared to spend the afternoon at Potsdam parks or at the Wannsee or Nikolassee, where the bathing season was in full swing. Only a small group of diplomats were left in the embassy. That morning an urgent telegram had arrived from Moscow, stating that the above-mentioned important statement had to be immediately conveyed to the German government.

I was instructed to get in touch with Wilhelmstrasse and arrange with it about a meeting between embassy representatives and Ribbentrop. When I rang the man on duty at the Ministry's secretariat, he replied that Ribbentrop was not in town. A call to the First Deputy Minister and Staatssekretär, Weizsäcker, likewise produced no results. Hour after hour passed and none of the high-ranking officials could be found. Only at midday did I contact Woermann, head of the Ministry's Political Department, but only to hear that neither Ribbentrop nor Weizsäcker were in the ministry.

"There seems to be an important conference going on at the Führer's headquarters, so I expect they are all there," he ex-

plained, "If you have any urgent business, let me know and I'll try to get in touch with the leadership."

I replied that this was impossible since the ambassador had received instructions to hand the statement personally to the minister, and I asked Woermann to let Ribbentrop know about this.

The matter about which we were trying to get a meeting with the minister could not be entrusted to anyone lower down. This was a statement that required an explanation from the German government as to the concentration of German troops along the Soviet border.

There were several telephone calls from Moscow that day, urging us to expedite this matter. But whenever we contacted the Ministry, the reply was always the same: Ribbentrop was out and no one knew when he would be back. He could not be reached, we were told, and no one could get in touch with him to inform him of our request.

By about seven o'clock in the evening everyone had gone home, but I had to stay in the embassy and try and get through to Ribbentrop. I sat down in my office, put the clock in front of me and decided to ring Wilhelmstrasse every thirty minutes.

Through the window which opened on the Unter den Linden I could see the Berliners taking their usual Saturday evening stroll under the young lime trees which lined the boulevard. The young girls and women were in brightly coloured dresses, while the men, for the most part middle-aged, were dressed in dark, old-fashioned suits. The police guard outside the embassy in his ugly Schutzmann helmet was leaning against the gate-post and dosing.

On my desk lay a pile of newspapers, which I had only managed to glance over in the morning. Now I had time to read them more closely. *Völkischer Beobachter*, the official organ of the Nazi party, had recently published a few articles by Otto Dietrich, head of the government's press department. These had been reported at a recent internal press conference by our embassy press-attaché. In these articles, which were inspired by Nazi quarters, Dietrich harped on one thing: the alleged threat which faced the German Reich and which impeded Hitler's plans for making this Reich last a thousand years. He pointed out that the German people and the government were compelled to eliminate this threat before they could start building this Reich. This idea, of

course, was being disseminated with a definite purpose. I recalled his articles published on the eve of Hitler's invasion of Yugoslavia in early April. Then he had held forth about the "sacred mission" of the German nation in South-East Europe, recalled Prince Eugene's campaign against Turkish-occupied Serbia in the 18th century, and had made it clear that the same campaign should now be undertaken by the Third Reich. Now in the light of the known facts concerning preparations for war in the East Dietrich's articles about a "new threat" seemed particularly significant. And the thought kept coming back to me that the rumour according to which June 22 figured as the last date for Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union might turn out to be true. It also seemed strange that all day long we had not been able to get in touch with Ribbentrop or his first deputy, although formerly when the minister himself was not in town, Weizsäcker was always ready to receive our embassy representative. And what was this important conference held at Hitler's headquarters to which, according to Woermann, all the Nazi bosses had been called.

But the next time I rang the ministry I received the same polite and stereotyped reply from the official on duty at the other end of the line:

"I regret to say that I have still not yet succeeded in contacting the Reichsminister. But I remember your request and am taking the necessary measures. . ."

To my remark that I would therefore have to continue to trouble him as before since the matter was urgent, he said politely that this was no trouble at all as he would remain on duty in the ministry until morning. And I continued to ring and ring but all to no avail. . .

Meanwhile in Moscow People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs Molotov, acting on the instruction of the Soviet government, invited the German ambassador Schulenburg at half past nine in the evening and informed him of the content of the Soviet note regarding the numerous violations of Soviet border by German planes. Molotov then vainly tried to get the ambassador to discuss the state of Soviet-German relations and explain German claims on the Soviet Union. In particular, Schulenburg was asked what had aroused Germany's dissatisfaction with the USSR, if this indeed was the case. Molotov also asked the ambassador to

explain why more and more rumours were being spread about a coming war between Germany and the Soviet Union and why there had been a mass departure from Moscow in recent days of German diplomatic personnel and their families. Finally, Schulenburg was asked why the German government had failed to respond to the peaceful TASS communiqué of June 14, which was intended to calm the situation. Schulenburg gave no proper answer to any of these questions.

While I continued vainly to ring Wilhelmstrasse, a new dispatch arrived from Moscow. This was about one o'clock in the morning. The dispatch informed us of the conversation between Molotov and Schulenburg and listed the questions that had been posed by the Soviet side in the course of the conversation. The Soviet ambassador in Berlin was once more instructed to meet Ribbentrop or his deputy without delay and raise these same questions. But my next call was just as futile as all the others.

Suddenly at 3 a. m. (it was 5 a. m. Moscow time, and already Sunday, June 22) the telephone rang. An unfamiliar voice informed me that Reichsminister Joachim von Ribbentrop was awaiting Soviet representatives in his office at the ministry of foreign affairs. The official phraseology and the almost barking voice seemed ill-boding to me. But in reply I made it out that it must concern the meeting with the minister that the Soviet embassy had been requesting all day.

"I know nothing of your request," said the voice at the other end of the line. "My instructions are simply to tell you that Reichsminister Ribbentrop requires the presence of Soviet embassy representatives immediately."

I said that it would take time to inform the ambassador and have a car ready, to which came the reply:

"The Reichsminister's personal car has been put at your disposal and is already waiting at the entrance of the Soviet embassy. The minister hopes that the Soviet representatives will arrive without delay. . ."

As we came out of the gates on to the Unter den Linden we saw the black limousine waiting for us at the curb. The chauffeur wore a dark service jacket and a cap with a large lacquered peak. Next to him sat an SS officer of the Totenkopf division as we could see from the skull and crossbones emblem on the crown of his cap.

Awaiting us on the pavement stood an official of the foreign ministry's protocol department in full-dress uniform. He opened the doors for us with excessive politeness. I had been asked to accompany the ambassador as interpreter and we were invited to occupy the rear seats, while the official took the folding seat. The car sped through the deserted street. On our right the Brandenburg Gates flashed past, and beyond them the dawn was already spreading its crimson glow over the lush foliage of the Tiergarten. It was going to be a clear, sunny day. . .

As we reached Wilhelmstrasse we could see in the distance that a crowd had gathered by the foreign ministry building. Although it was already dawning the entrance with its wrought-iron awning was brightly illuminated with spotlights. All around there were newspaper photographers, cameramen and journalists. The official jumped out of the car first and opened the doors for us. We came out blinded by the spotlights and the cameras flashing. A horrible thought struck me—did this mean war? What else would account for such a crowd outside the foreign ministry building in the early hours of the morning? The newspaper photographers and cameramen literally stuck to us, running ahead and clicking away with their cameras as we ascended the carpeted staircase to the first floor. Along the long corridor which led to the minister's office there were people in uniform standing at attention. As we appeared they noisily clicked their heels and raised their arms in the Nazi salute. At last we turned to the right and came to the minister's office.

On one side of the vast room stood a desk, and in the opposite corner a round table, a large part of which was occupied by a heavy lamp under a tall lampshade. Several arm-chairs stood around in disorder.

At first the room seemed empty, until we caught sight of Ribbentrop sitting at his desk in his ordinary grey-green ministerial uniform. Looking round, we saw a group of Nazi officials in the corner to the right of the door. We had to walk the whole length of the room to reach Ribbentrop, and while we did so these officials did not move. They continued to stay there at some distance from us throughout the whole of the meeting. Very likely they could not even hear what Ribbentrop said, so spacious was the old room, which was probably intended by its owner to emphasise the importance of Hitler's foreign minister.

As we came right up to his desk Ribbentrop stood up, nodded silently, shook hands and invited us to the round table in the opposite corner. His face was swollen and purple, and his eyes were red. He walked in front with his head down, and seemed slightly unsteady on his feet. The thought flashed through my head that he was drunk.

After we had sat down and Ribbentrop began to speak, I realised that I was right. He had obviously been drinking heavily.

The Soviet ambassador had intended to read the text of the statement which we had brought with us, but Ribbentrop, raising his voice said that we had been invited for quite a different reason. Stumbling over almost every word he began to explain in a rather confused manner that the German government had received information about concentrations of Soviet troops along the German border. Ignoring the fact that for the last few weeks the Soviet embassy had on instructions from Moscow repeatedly tried to draw the Germans' attention to the violations of Soviet border by German troops and aircraft, Ribbentrop alleged that, on the contrary, Soviet troops had violated the German border and invaded German territory. This, of course, was pure fabrication.

Then Ribbentrop said that he had briefly conveyed the contents of Hitler's memorandum, the full text of which he handed to us there and then. The current situation, he continued, can only be regarded by the German government as a threat to Germany at a moment when the latter is waging a life-and-death struggle against the British. All this, Ribbentrop declared, is qualified by the German government and the Führer personally as the Soviet Union's intention to stab the German people in the back. The Führer could not tolerate such a threat and has therefore decided to take measures to protect the life and security of the German nation. His decision is final. An hour ago German troops crossed the Soviet border.

Then Ribbentrop tried to assure us that Germany's actions were not aggressive, but only defensive measures. Then he got up and stretched to his full height, trying to look imposing. But there was no firmness or confidence in the voice when he said:

"The Führer had instructed me to make an official announcement of these defensive measures. . ."

We also stood up. The meeting was over. Now we knew that

shells were already bursting in our land. After the aggressive, treacherous attack, war had now been officially declared. . . Now there was no going back. Before leaving the Soviet ambassador said:

"This is brazen-faced, unprovoked aggression against the Soviet Union. And you will pay dearly for it. . ."

We turned round and walked out. And then something unexpected happened. Ribbentrop suddenly came running up to us. Speaking fast in a low whisper, he told us that he personally had been against the Führer's decision. He said he had even tried to dissuade Hitler from attacking the Soviet Union. He, Ribbentrop, considered it madness. But what could he do? Hitler had made up his mind and would not listen to anyone.

"Tell them in Moscow that I was against the invasion. . ." the last words of the Reichsminister reached us when we were already in the corridor.

Again there were the clicking of cameras and the humming of cine-cameras. On the street where we were confronted by a crowd of reporters it was bright sunshine. We got into the black limousine which had been waiting for us all the time by the entrance.

We sat in silence on the way back to the embassy. But my thoughts kept returning to the scene we had just witnessed in the office of the Nazi minister. Why had that Nazi cut-throat, who like all the other Nazi bosses was the sworn enemy of communism, and pathologically hated the Soviet people, been so nervous? What had happened to his usual brazen super-confidence? Of course, he had been lying when he said he had tried to dissuade Hitler from attacking the Soviet Union. But why did he say those last words to us? Now remembering it all I think that at that fateful moment when he officially announced the decision that was ultimately to lead to the collapse of the Third Reich, Ribbentrop was probably struck with some dire foreboding. . . Perhaps that was why he had been drinking. . .

As we drew up to the embassy we noticed that the building was now under strong guard. Instead of the one policeman who usually stood at the gates, a whole chain of soldiers in SS uniform was now strung out along the pavement.

The other diplomats in the embassy were anxiously awaiting us. They probably still had no idea of why we had been summoned by Ribbentrop. Something, however, had occurred which put everybody on the alert: as soon as we had left for Wilhelm-

strasse all contact between the embassy and the outside world was suddenly cut—not a single telephone was working.

At six o'clock in the morning (Moscow time) we switched on the radio to hear if there was any special news bulletins from Moscow. But the Soviet stations were only broadcasting regular programmes, and when the news did come on it was only the usual reports on industry and agriculture. Could it be that they still had no idea in Moscow that several hours ago war had broken out? Or perhaps the fighting was considered only as a border incident though on a slightly larger scale than those that had taken place over the last few weeks.

Since the telephone communication was not restored and we could not ring Moscow, it was decided to send a telegram about our meeting with Ribbentrop. The Vice-Consul G. I. Fomin was instructed to take the coded dispatch to the main post office in an embassy car with a diplomatic number plate. This car was an enormous ZIS-101, which was usually used for travel to official receptions. The car left the gates but fifteen minutes later Fomin returned alone on foot. And he only succeeded in getting back thanks to the fact that he had had his diplomatic papers on him. They had been stopped by a patrol, and the driver and the car had been taken away.

Besides ZIS and M automobiles, in the embassy garage we had a small yellow Opel Olympia. This we decided to use for getting to the post office as it would attract less attention. We worked out what we would do beforehand. I got behind the wheel, the embassy gates were thrown open, and I shot out into the street as fast as I could. This worked perfectly, and once outside I looked round with a sigh of relief: there was not a single car outside the embassy building and the SS men just stood and stared at me in perplexity.

But we did not manage to get the telegram off straight away. At the main post-office in Berlin all the employees were standing, listening to a loudspeaker from which Goebbels' hysterical shrieks could be heard. The subject of his speech was that the Bolsheviks had tried to stab the Germans in the back and so the Führer had decided to send his troops against the Soviet Union thereby saving the German nation.

I called one of the clerks over and gave him the telegram. But when he saw the address, he exclaimed in astonishment:

"You're not sending this to Moscow, are you? Haven't you heard what's going on?"

Without entering into a discussion I asked him to take the telegram and give me a receipt. Later, when we eventually returned to Moscow, we learned that the telegram had never been delivered.

When on the way back from the post office I turned off Friedrichstrasse on to the Unter den Linden I saw that there were four military vehicles standing outside our embassy. Evidently the SS guards weren't going to let the same thing happen again.

On the first floor of the embassy a number of people were standing around the radio as before. But Moscow gave not a word on what had happened. Going to my office downstairs I saw through the window some boys running along the pavement outside, waving the late newspaper issues. I went outside the gates and bought several papers from one of the boys. Already there were the first photographs from the front. With grief in our hearts we looked at the pictures of our Soviet soldiers lying dead or wounded. A communiqué issued by the German command stated that during the night German aircraft had bombed Moghilev, Lvov, Rovno, Grodno and other towns. It was clear that Nazi propaganda was trying to create the impression that the war would be easy for the Germans and would soon come to an end.

Throughout the morning we kept coming back to the radio, but all that it broadcast was folk music and marches. It was not until 12 noon that Molotov spoke. He read the statement of the Soviet government:

"Today at four a.m. German troops attacked our country without making any claims on the Soviet Union and without any declaration of war. . . Our cause is just. The enemy will be beaten. We will be victorious."

"... We will be victorious. . . Our cause is just. . ." These words came to us in the lair of the enemy, from our far-off motherland.

The Return Home

In the Hands of the Enemy

Immediately on our return from Wilhelmstrasse measures had been taken to destroy our secret documentation. This had to be

done without delay because at any moment the SS that were guarding the building could break in and seize the embassy archives. At the same time our diplomatic staff in the consulate began work drawing up an exact list of all Soviet personnel in Germany and in German-occupied territory.

On that first morning after the invasion on June 22 only those who had diplomatic passes were allowed to enter the embassy. This in fact meant not only the embassy diplomatic staff, but also a few members of the Soviet trade mission. The deputy trade representative, Kormilitsyn, had gone to the mission headquarters on Lietzenburgerstrasse, but had not been allowed inside. It was already in the hands of the Gestapo and he could see them actually throwing files of documents through the windows. Black smoke was pouring out of one of the upper windows where some mission workers had barricaded themselves in against the SS and were hurriedly burning documents.

Much later one of those who was present in the trade mission on that day recounted what had happened. On the night of June 21-22 the duty officers had been K. I. Fedechkin and A. D. Bozulaev. At first everything had gone as normal, but suddenly around midnight all incoming telegrams ceased, a thing which had never happened before. This was the first signal as it were, which alerted the duty officers. The second signal was a signal no longer in the figurative sense; but the very real sound of the alarm going off. As the first rays of the sun came through the shutters they heard the harsh sound of the embassy alarm system. Fedechkin lifted the receiver of the telephone which connected him with the man on duty by the gate.

"Why did you sound the alarm?"

"A crowd of armed SS men are trying to break down the door," came the anxious voice of the duty officer. "Something's up. They're shouting and banging and any moment they'll break the door down."

The duty officers knew that the glass doors of the mission headquarters would not withstand any force and the iron mesh door behind them could not put up much resistance either. So the Germans could get in at any moment. In minutes they would be at the closed door of the reception room, which alone would withstand attack for some time. There was not a minute to be lost. Fedechkin called his colleagues N. P. Logachev and

E. I. Shmatov, whose rooms were on the same floor as the reception room. All four of them barricaded the door and then began destroying the secret documentation.

The stove in the room was too small, it would take only a small amount of paper. So they had to light a fire on the floor on the large iron sheet where the stove had stood. Smoke filled the room, but they couldn't stop for a minute as the fascists were already trying to break the door down.

The sheet of iron became red-hot and it got unbearably hot and stuffy in the room. Even the parquet flooring was burning, but they continued to destroy the documents so that nothing fell into the hands of the fascists. Every so often one or other of them would run to the window for a breath of fresh air and then return to the pile of burning paper that was slowly turning into ashes. . .

When the SS finally broke down the door and roared in, everything had been done. All they found was a pile of ashes and the four men sitting immobile on the floor. The fascists kicked them up with their boots and searched them. Then they were made to go downstairs to the hall of the mission building. All four of them were pushed into a black van and taken off to the Gestapo. There their watches, money and other personal belongings were taken from them and they were thrown into separate cells. Several times a day they were interrogated and beaten in an attempt to get the secret information out of them. They were also made to sign some papers. This lasted for ten days. But the Soviet men held out courageously and the fascists learned nothing. They fulfilled their duty with honour and were only released on the day we left Berlin where they were handed over to us directly at the railway station. They could barely stand up. Logachev, whom I knew well from work at the trade mission, was scarcely recognisable, covered as he was in bruises. . .

Around 2 p. m. on that same day the telephone in the embassy suddenly rang. It was the protocol department of the ministry of foreign affairs ringing to inform us that until it had been decided which country would undertake to protect the interests of the Soviet Union in Germany our embassy would have to appoint one individual for liaison with Wilhelmstrasse. We told them that we would let them know in fifteen or twenty minutes and

at the same time asked permission to bring the films and part of the library from the Soviet Community Club.

As it turned out I was the person selected to liaise with Wilhelmstrasse and we informed the protocol representative of this when he rang back half an hour later.

After writing down my name, he said that in this case an exception would be made and one embassy representative would be allowed to go to the club and bring back whatever the embassy considered necessary. But this had to be done before six o'clock, after which all embassy personnel were categorically forbidden to leave the grounds of the embassy. The representatives authorised to liaise with Wilhelmstrasse would be allowed out only for talks with the ministry of foreign affairs and each time this would have to be agreed upon beforehand. Furthermore the representative would travel to and from the ministry only in the company of the guards' commanding officer, a certain Oberleutnant SS Heinemann. Should the embassy wish to communicate with the ministry of foreign affairs, this also had to be done via Heinemann.

After this he hung up.

As we discovered immediately the telephone connection was one way only: they could ring in, but we could not ring out.

We decided that it was best to send me to the club in an embassy car. Since there was only time to make one journey we could only bring a limited number of things, so it was decided we should bring the films about Lenin—in April, we had been sent films from Moscow about Lenin and the anniversary of his birth—as well as the works of Lenin and a few other Marxist classics. We did not want the fascists to burn them or give them a reason for another anti-communist demonstration.

But when I got to the club the policeman on duty outside had not been warned of my arrival and refused to let me in. So I was forced to ring Wilhelmstrasse again. Opposite the club was a little shop which sold beer, cigarettes and other small items. We often used to call in there on our way to the club to drink a cold foaming beer or chat with old Isidor who owned the shop. I decided to go there to use the telephone. Isidor met me very courteously and lowering his voice said that he was shocked at the news that the Soviet Union had been invaded.

"Now who knows where it'll all end? We've really taken on a

fight to the death," he grumbled when I gave him a mark for some small change to use in the telephone. I dialed the number of the protocol department and complained that despite our agreement I was still not being allowed to go into the club as the policeman on duty had received no instructions. They replied that they were sorry and would take the necessary steps. I was told to wait outside the club.

Going back to the bar I ordered a beer and started chatting to Isidor, naturally enough about the war and the hardships that it brought.

Fifteen minutes later I saw through the open door of the shop a motorbike with a side-car draw up in front of the club on the opposite side of the street. An SS officer got down and went over to say something to the policeman on duty. The latter came across the street into Isidor's shop and told me that I could now go into the club. The SS officer drove off and the policeman came into the club with me. First he stood in silence and watched me packing the round metallic boxes that contained the films. But when I began to pack the books he came and, without saying a word, helped me to tie up piles of books with string and carry them out to the car. I also said nothing and for a fairly long time we worked in silence. Only when I had got into the car and started the engine did he suddenly say:

"All the best, comrade. . ."

Looking round I waved to him. These first two meetings with ordinary Germans after Hitler's brutal invasion of the Soviet Union quite amazed me. Neither of them showed the slightest hostility or enmity. Obviously Goebbels' anti-Soviet propaganda had not been entirely effective.

I got back to the embassy a few minutes before six—just in time! The courtyard looked like a gypsy encampment. All the embassy staff and their families were there with their cases and bundles. There were children all over the place from tiny babies to teenagers. As there was no room for everyone in the living quarters, many families were forced to live in the offices. But this was only a small part of the total Soviet community that we were responsible for. According to the lists which we had drawn up there were about one thousand Soviet citizens resident in Germany and the occupied territories.

An Argument at the Wilhelmstrasse

The next morning I was requested to go to Wilhelmstrasse for preliminary talks. This information was communicated to us by Oberleutnant Heinemann who accompanied me to the ministry in a car. The main entrance of the ministry building now looked just as it always used to. The man who met me from the protocol department declared that he had been authorised to discuss the question of Soviet citizens still in Germany and the occupied territories. He had a list in front of him which, I noticed, largely coincided with the information we had. He informed me that all Soviet citizens had been interned. However the main problem, he said, was that there were present in the Soviet Union only 120 German citizens, who were for the most part embassy officials or other persons working for German organisations in Moscow.

"The German side," he went on to say, "proposes the exchange of these German citizens for a similar number of Soviet citizens. The exact composition of the list can be decided by the embassy."

I made an immediate protest about this. The fact that there were only 120 Germans left in the Soviet Union as against almost one thousand Soviet personnel was clear evidence of the fact that it had not been the Soviet Union that had been preparing to invade Germany, as German propaganda claimed, but precisely the reverse. Having decided to invade the Soviet Union the German government had made sure that as many of its personnel and their families as possible had left the Soviet Union prior to the invasion. I said that I would inform the ambassador of the German proposal, but I was sure that we would not leave until all Soviet citizens in Germany and in the occupied territories had been allowed to return home.

"I am not authorised to discuss that," said the official, "I can only convey to you what I have been instructed. And I must also add that the German government has seized as war trophies all Soviet ships found in German ports."

I asked how many this included.

"I cannot tell you precisely," he replied, adding with a malicious smile, "It would seem that there is not a single German ship in any Soviet ports. . ."

Much later when we had returned to Moscow we found out

that the German ships that had been in the Soviet Baltic and Black Sea ports, had suddenly left Soviet territorial waters on June 20 and June 21 without even finishing their loading.

It seemed that no one in the Soviet Union paid much attention to that. Later I learned something which explained why this happened. On the eve of the war there were more than a score of German ships in the port of Riga. Some had only just begun to unload, others were not yet fully laden. But suddenly on June 21 they all weighed anchor. The port authorities, feeling that something was wrong, took the risk of detaining the German ships while they contacted Moscow. The People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade was informed, but they requested instructions from higher up. Stalin was immediately informed, but he feared that Hitler would use the detention of German ships as a pretext for military provocation and therefore ordered that they should be immediately released. Evidently for the same reason the captains of Soviet ships in German ports were not warned in advance.

But to return to the meeting at Wilhelmstrasse. The reaction of all our diplomats when they heard of the German proposals was the same: we categorically refused to make an exchange of equal numbers. At the next meeting I was instructed to state that we absolutely insisted that all Soviet citizens should be allowed to leave Germany. The persons interned outside Berlin should be brought to the capital and handed over to the Soviet consul.

For several days it remained unclear which country would represent the interests of the Soviet Union in Berlin. Meanwhile there was no time to lose as we all understood perfectly the tragic fate that awaited Soviet citizens if they were unable to return to their homeland together with the diplomatic staff. Somehow we had to try and find a way to contact Moscow.

Several of the diplomatic staff had contacts among the German anti-fascist underground. Through them it would be possible to pass information about the present situation to a Soviet embassy in a neutral country. The task of making contact with these people was given to Alexander Mikhailovitch Korotkov and myself. But how were we to go about it? The embassy was completely shut off from the outside world. No one was allowed outside the gates except me and I was closely guarded by Oberleutnant Heinemann. And in any case I could only leave the building when summoned from the Wilhelmstrasse.

We cudgelled our brains for a long time trying to find a way in which one of us might break through the SS cordon which surrounded us. But having carefully examined the situation we were forced to the conclusion that any attempt to get out of the embassy secretly under cover of night was doomed to failure. At night they increased the guard and the outside of the building was brightly illuminated by spotlights. Outside the wall of the house that backed on to the embassy there were also SS patrols with Alsatian dogs. But even so, we could not just sit and wait. We had to try and find some way of getting out.

An SS Guard Helps the Bolsheviki

Oberleutnant SS Heinemann was a tall, heavily built, middle-aged man. He was also unusually sociable. By the second day of our acquaintance I already knew that he had a wife who was sick, that his brother served in the Reichskanzlei guard and that his son Erich was about to graduate from military college from where he expected to be sent to the front. Heinemann was not too keen on this and he had asked his brother to see if he could get him posted somewhere in the rear.

This kind of conversation between an SS officer and one furthermore who was the commander of the guard, and an embassy official at a time of war put me very much on my guard. Heinemann might have been trying to get me to give him some confidential information. But, on the other hand, perhaps in his heart of hearts he did not feel hostile towards us. Who knows, maybe he would even help us? At any rate it was worth paying a bit more attention to him. Talking the matter over amongst ourselves it was decided that we ought to try to get "friendly" with him, making sure of course to be extremely careful as any false step could only make things worse for the embassy and give the Nazis an excuse for provocation.

And so one evening when Heinemann had done his round of guard duty and had called in the embassy to find out if there was anything we wanted to communicate to Wilhelmstrasse, I asked him to sit down and have a rest in the dining room.

"Would you like something to eat?" I asked him. "You must be tired after your day's work and it's a long time since lunch."

Heinemann refused at first, saying that he was on duty, but he finally agreed to have a bite to eat with me.

That evening we had a long and fairly open discussion. After a few glasses Heinemann began to tell me that according to his brother the Reichskanzlei was very worried at the unexpected resistance that the German troops were meeting in the Soviet Union. In many places Soviet soldiers were fighting to the last bullet and then going in hand-to-hand. Nowhere had the Germans yet faced such stubborn resistance and suffered such great losses. In the west, said Heinemann, everything was much easier, a "walkover" he called it. But in Russia it was different and even a few people in the Reichskanzlei were beginning to have their doubts about the wisdom of invading the Soviet Union.

This was indeed extraordinary coming from the mouth of an SS guard. Perhaps, I thought, Heinemann had not been completely poisoned by Nazi fanaticism. Furthermore, he seemed to make no secret of the fact that these communications from the front worried him about what might happen to his son.

"If he gets sent to the eastern front," he said several times, "there's not much chance that he'll get out alive."

Being still unsure about Heinemann, I listened in silence, except that when he started to talk about his son I said that this war should never have happened and then not only his own son Erich would not come to harm, but the sons of many other Germans as well.

"You're quite right," he replied. "What on earth is this war for?"

Our meal continued for about two hours and Heinemann and I became fairly friendly.

The next day I invited him to breakfast. This time he did not even try to refuse. I wanted to find out how far he could be useful to us and so I had to find the right way to approach him so that if I got the wrong reaction I could turn it into a joke.

After talking for a bit about the news from the front, Heinemann returned once more to the thing that most worried him.

"Soon Erich will be finishing military college and according to custom here in Germany I shall have to buy him a full-dress uniform and arms. But what with my wife being ill I have had to spend almost all my savings. . ."

By talking about money Heinemann had himself made the first

step in the right direction. I decided to take advantage of this. It was of course risky, because if Heinemann already guessed that we wanted to get something out of him, it would be natural to bring up the subject of payment and this could be a way of trying to find out what we were after. It could also be simply provocation because an attempt at the bribery of an SS guard commander on the part of the Soviet embassy would be most opportune for the Nazi propaganda machine. But on the other hand there was no time to be lost. Another occasion like this might not present itself and we had to get through the SS cordon as soon as possible.

"I could possibly help you out, Herr Heinemann," I said in what I hoped was a casual tone. "I've been working for a fairly long time in Berlin and have some money put away for a radio-gram. But there's no point in my getting it now because we can't take anything with us apart from one suitcase with personal items and a small sum of money for travelling expenses. So my savings are useless. It's a bit embarrassing to ask, but if you like I can give you a thousand marks."

Heinemann looked at me intently and said nothing. Evidently he was thinking whether it was worth taking such a step. After a minute he said:

"Thank you very much for such an offer. But how could I take such a large sum of money off you for nothing?"

"Well, like I said, the money's useless in any case. I can't take it with me. It will simply be confiscated together with all the other money in the embassy. And what is a thousand marks to the Third Reich? But to you it would really come in handy. Anyway, suit yourself. I'm not really bothered who gets my money. . ."

Heinemann lit a cigarette and leant back in his chair drawing the smoke in deeply several times. I could sense the internal struggle that was taking place within him.

"Well," he said finally, "if I agree, you understand that not a single person must know about it."

"It's my personal savings," I said in an attempt to ease his mind. "No one even knows I've got the money. I'll give it to you and that's that."

I took out my wallet, counted out one thousand marks and put the money on the table. Heinemann's hand reached slowly

forwards. Then he took a large purse out of his back pocket and stacking the money neatly he put it away in one of its compartments. Then he put the purse back in his pocket and let out a sigh of relief.

And so the first step had been taken.

Heinemann said:

"I really don't know how to thank you. If there was some way I could repay my gratitude..."

I decided there was no point in rushing things. It was better to wait a bit and consolidate my position.

"Don't mention it. I'm glad to be of some help to you. Especially since it more or less costs me nothing since the money's of no use to me."

We sat on for a short while and when Heinemann got up to leave I invited him to pop in around midday for a spot of lunch.

For the ten days that we had been interned in the embassy our provisions had come from a small grocer's shop where we had previously placed our orders. The shopkeeper, a fat, phlegmatic, querulous man, who invariably stood behind the counter in a dirty apron, now came every morning in his little van, dressed instead in the brown SA uniform. The embassy wives organised themselves to do the cooking and under the guidance of Lakomov, the embassy chef, made breakfast, lunch and dinner for everyone. On this day, however, Lakomov was fully occupied in preparing lunch for Heinemann. When he came in the table in the small dining room on the ground floor was laid and in addition to the local food provided by the SA grocer there were Russian *zakuski* (hors d'œuvre). Cognac, beer and wine were also in plentiful supply. It was my intention not only to give Heinemann a good meal but to take the matter in hand a stage further. We had discussed the whole thing and worked out a plan of action. Thus when over the dessert Heinemann returned to the conversation we had had in the morning and once more expressed the desire to help us, I said:

"Well, thank you Herr Heinemann, but there is nothing really that I want. However, I do have a friend here and there is something you just might be able to do for him. It is a purely personal matter and I have certainly promised him nothing, because he knows nothing at all about our relationship." I added the last bit to set his mind at rest.

"What does he want, this friend of yours? Maybe we could think up some way of helping him."

"The thing is that he had become very friendly with a German girl and the war started so suddenly that he didn't even have time to say good-bye to her. What he would like is to be able to get out of the embassy for an hour or so and go and see her for the last time. You yourself know what being at war means. Very likely these young people will never see each other again. So I'd like to help him. But we're strictly forbidden to leave the embassy, so it looks as though he's going to be disappointed. . ."

"Well, maybe we can think up something," said Heinemann.

Lighting up a cigarette he sat back in silence for a few moments thinking. Then as if speaking his thoughts aloud, he said:

"The embassy guards know that I go with you every so often to Wilhelmstrasse. They're quite used to us leaving together. They probably wouldn't pay any attention if a third party came along, so long as we all returned to the embassy together. What we could do is to drop him off in the town and pick him up an hour or so later. That sounds the best way of doing it, what do you think?"

To be really on the safe side I first tried to assure Heinemann that there was no point in him running a risk over such a trivial matter. My friend, I said would get by without saying good-bye to the girl. But Heinemann seemed set on his plan and so eventually I let myself be persuaded that this operation could indeed be carried out.

"If we think about it carefully and plan it all," said Heinemann, now trying to convince me, "then it will be no problem."

Of course, there was no question of us being fully confident that an SS officer would be prepared to give the Bolsheviks sincere help. Once outside the gates of the embassy he could simply arrest us, take us to the local Gestapo headquarters and claim that we had attempted to bribe him. Thus we had to be continually on our guard. And so when Heinemann got up to go I said that I was still not sure whether it was worth doing it. As he left I invited him to call in again in the evening.

As soon as he had gone we had another discussion on the advisability of going through with it. It was still very risky and could have serious political consequences. But at the same time, there was the chance of making contact with Moscow. After a long

discussion where we weighed the pros and cons we finally decided to give it a chance.

Oberleutnant Heinemann was as punctual as ever. But this time I was waiting for him with Korotkov to introduce him as the young man with the girl-friend.

"So you've taken a fancy to one of our girls?" said Heinemann after being introduced and shaking hands. "Well, perhaps I'll be able to help you."

We sat at the table and Heinemann seemed to be in excellent spirits. He laughed and joked a lot and told us about his son and how before the war they had gone to the Bavarian Alps for their summer holidays. Every so often he would tease Sasha Korotkov about his affair and recollect the time during the First World War when as a prisoner in France he himself fell in love with a French girl and then had to say good-bye to her.

"I know I'm not as young as was," said Heinemann, "but I understand what a chance to see this girl once more must mean to you."

We agreed to give the operation a try at eleven o'clock the following morning when Heinemann came to the embassy after doing his rounds. We decided to use the Opel Olympia so as not to attract too much attention on the streets of Berlin. Heinemann said that he would first contact the ministry of foreign affairs to find out if they intended to call me in the morning. Apart from the discussion of these details everything else looked as though we were just planning to go out on an innocent picnic. Perhaps Heinemann really did believe our story about a girl-friend. If not, he gave a really good impression of someone about to help in organising a lovers' tryst. But we were still very worried. We said good-bye fairly late that evening still unsure about what might happen on the following day.

A Window to Freedom

Heinemann did not arrive at the appointed time. We anxiously worried what would happen if he had deceived us and the Gestapo already knew of our arrangement with him. It is easy to understand the state of nerves we were all in when about two o'clock in the afternoon the bell rang. It was Heinemann. He excused himself for his lateness, but explained that his wife's

health had deteriorated and he had been forced to stay at home. Then he had spoken to the ministry of foreign affairs and asked them not to organise any meetings with me for that day because as his wife was ill he would not be able to accompany me. Thus we were completely free to put our plan into operation.

We went into the reception room and while Sasha Korotkov poured Heinemann some vodka I went down to the garage to get out the Opel. Heinemann found difficulty in squeezing into the passenger seat next to me especially since his long broadsword got in the way. Finally he had to undo the buckle, take the sword off and throw it on to the back seat where Sasha was already sitting. The guards opened the gates, Heinemann saluted and we were outside at liberty. But I kept looking in the window to make sure no one was following us.

On all our journeys outside the embassy so far we had only gone to the ministry of foreign affairs. So as not to arouse suspicion I also turned left by the Brandenburg Gate and went a few blocks along Wilhelmstrasse. But instead of turning into the foreign ministry building we carried on further. It was strange being out in the streets of Berlin again. The weather was dull, warm and dry. The shop windows shone like mirrors and the people walked along unhurriedly. On street corners they were selling flowers and ladies were out taking their dogs for a walk, all as if nothing had changed. But at the same time the realisation that for several days already war had been raging in the East and that we were here among our mortal enemies altered our impression of the seemingly peaceful picture of Berlin.

We had already arranged to put Sasha off by the large Kaufhaus des Westens department store where it was easy to hide among the crowd and where there was an entrance nearby to the underground. We would then pick him up two hours later at the Nollendorfplatz underground station.

When we stopped he got out and quickly disappeared into the crowd. We immediately drove on and spent a long time going aimlessly round the streets. Remembering that I was nearly out of razor blades I stopped at the first shop that sold them. While I was selecting some blades Heinemann picked up a fine-looking shaving brush.

"I wouldn't mind one like that," he said enviously. "But you'd need to have plenty of money to afford it. . ."

I suggested that he accept it from me as a gift. He did not need any persuading and when I paid for the brush he put it straight into his jacket pocket. Along the Charlottenburger Chaussee we went to the famous Berlin Funkturm, the radio tower which was a favourite place for Berliners in the evenings but was almost deserted in the daytime. We decided to spend the time there.

First we went for a walk in the park. In a little corner near a rubbish bin we found two benches painted in a sickly yellow colour. On the backs of the benches painted clearly in black was the letter "J", the first letter of the word "Jude". As in all the gardens and parks all over the Third Reich the benches near the rubbish bins were set aside for the Jews. When Heinemann and I passed the sorrowful figure of a woman in black sitting, with her back bent, on the edge of the bench, I shuddered.

"I know how you feel," said Heinemann quietly.

This SS officer was certainly a rare bird.

"I'll tell you a joke that is going round Berlin," he said when we had gone on a bit further. An old woman is sitting in the underground with a Star of David sown on her front. Next to her there is a free place. After a bit a German woman comes in with a little girl and sits next to the old woman, who immediately gets up to give her place to the little Arian girl. The girl sits down but the mother makes her stand up again.

"'What on earth are you doing,' says the mother annoyed, 'you can't sit on a seat where a Jew's just been sitting...'"

"For a while no one sits there. Then an old worker who is sitting opposite gets up and takes the seat himself. He rubs his bottom all over the seat and then gets up and says to the German woman:

"'Begging your pardon, madam, but now your daughter can sit down again. There's nothing to worry about. The place has been restored to its Arian purity...'"

"Perhaps it's not so much a joke as something that really happened," said Heinemann with a laugh.

We sat down at a table on the terrace of an outdoor cafe at the foot of the radio tower. Now Heinemann seemed to liven up a bit and ordered two mugs of Munich beer. He had been silent almost all the time in the car after we left the embassy, evidently from being anxious himself. Now he became his usual chatty self,

telling all sorts of amusing stories from his schooldays. I listened to him rather distractedly and wondered how Sasha was getting on.

Finally it was time to go to the spot where we had agreed to meet Sasha. As we approached the Nollendorfplatz I could see him from a distance. He was standing staring in a shop window, seemingly engrossed in the goods on display. But he knew we were coming and as I stopped the car he came over to the curb, casually waving to us. I opened the door, we exchanged a brief greeting and then he got unhurriedly into the back seat. Anyone watching would have thought it to be an accidental meeting between friends. As he settled himself in the back seat Sasha gave me a hard squeeze on the shoulder and my heart bounded with joy—the sign meant that he had been successful.

“Well, how was she?” asked Heinemann.

“Fine, thanks very much. She was so glad to see me.”

Heinemann began to make a few jokes, but we weren't listening to him. We drove through the streets and eventually arrived back at the embassy building where I sounded the horn for the gates to be opened. Once inside we sighed with relief.

In the embassy a meal for the three of us was already prepared. Of course, we could not wait for Heinemann to go, but we had to sit and listen to his endless stories for more than an hour. Relaxing after the nervous tension of the day made us somehow apathetic.

When Heinemann at last went those who had been privy to the operation held a conference. Everything had gone well and our friends had been passed a brief communiqué on the situation in Berlin for forwarding to Moscow. If all went well it would actually be there that same evening. But we wanted to be certain that the message had got through and also receive confirmation from Moscow that what we were doing was correct. It was therefore decided to try another journey out using the hole in the fence that had been given to us by Oberleutnant Heinemann.

Toast to Victory

The next day Sasha and I invited Heinemann to breakfast. He told us the latest news from the front that was going round the Reichskanzlei and differed sharply from the victorious broadcasts

published by the German newspapers. The situation on the Soviet-German front was quite different from the way it was being depicted by the Nazi propaganda machine. Soviet units were putting up fierce resistance. Many fortified positions, like Brest Fortress continued to hold out bravely. The Germans were suffering enormous losses. All of which, according to Heinemann, was a cause of serious concern in the Reichskanzlei.

Then our conversation turned to yesterday's trip into town. Heinemann asked jokingly if Sasha would like to see his girlfriend again.

"Of course I would like to," he replied. "But I don't want to put you to so much trouble. . ."

Heinemann said that although there was an element of risk involved, it nevertheless might be arranged.

"If you agree," said Sasha, "then maybe I could have a bit more time, say three or four hours?"

"I see your appetite comes with the eating, as they say," said Heinemann. "Tomorrow is Sunday and the ministry of foreign affairs is closed, so they won't call us out. Say, we leave at ten in the morning and return for lunch."

The next day at the appointed time our Opel was already waiting by the gates in the embassy courtyard. Heinemann arrived ten minutes early. As I greeted him I noticed that this time he was not wearing his broadsword. Instead on the broad belt that went round his jacket he wore a holster from which could just be seen the handle of his Walter. My heart missed a beat. All my former doubts came back. Very likely Heinemann had been carrying a pistol before, but it had been under his coat and I had not seen it. Now it was in sight and could be drawn easily. This gave rise to unpleasant thoughts. Supposing Heinemann had decided to catch us at the scene of the crime, as they say? What if the moment we were outside the gates he pulled out his Walter and ordered us to drive to the Gestapo headquarters? I looked quickly at Sasha—he was obviously thinking the same thing. So what should we do, refuse to go? I decided we had to probe Heinemann and see if he would give himself away.

"What's happened to your sword?" I said, forcing myself to smile. "It suited you."

Heinemann replied casually:

"Well, you see last time it got in my way in that little Opel,

so I decided to leave it at home today. And according to regulations, if you are not wearing a sword, then you must wear a pistol on your belt. . .”

This made us feel a bit better. We went out into the yard and got in the car, everyone sitting exactly where they were the last time.

After leaving the embassy we made for the underground on Ulanstrasse. Here too there were always plenty of people. I stopped the car and Sasha got out to disappear into the underground. We had agreed to meet here at a quarter to two. There was a lot of time and we decided to have a run out to the city ring-road. Here we stopped for a while in a wood and then Heinemann suggested we return for a bite to eat.

Stopping the car at a restaurant on the corner of Kurfürstendamm opposite the Gedächtniskirche, we went through the shiny revolving doors into a large hall to find a table. Suddenly someone called out:

“Hey, Heinemann! Over here!”

A group of six SS officers were sitting at a large table that was covered in beer glasses. Obviously they had been sitting there for a long time because there was a whole pile of beer mats on the edge of the table which were given out with every glass ordered and according to which the waiter totted up the bill at the end. They all seemed to know Heinemann well, for they waved to him and invited him over to their table. What could we do? It would not be too pleasant if it was discovered that Heinemann was going around the streets of Berlin with an interned Soviet diplomat. But just then I heard Heinemann hurriedly whispering in my ear:

“I’ll introduce you as a relative of my wife from Munich. Say you work in an arms factory, then no one will expect you to do too much talking. Your name is Kurt Hüsker. Come on then and be careful.”

We went up to the table and the SS officers greeted us, some of them standing up, others barely raising themselves from their chairs, “Heil Hitler”s came from all sides and Heinemann replied in a loud voice while I mumbled vaguely.

After I had been introduced we all sat down again and we ordered beer for everyone. The talk, of course, was about the fighting on the Soviet-German front and of the night bombing

which Britain had renewed. The SS men spoke about the fierce battles that were going on in Russia and about the strong resistance that the Russians were putting up which was more stubborn than any the Germans had yet encountered. I did not doubt that my knowledge of the language which had been considerably improved during my stay in Germany would not let me down, but was still glad that Heinemann had told me to say I worked in a munitions factory in Munich, because this gave me an excuse for remaining silent, and none of the SS men had the slightest suspicion that I was not the person I claimed to be.

One of the SS men made a short speech in honour of Germany, the Führer and the German armed forces finishing with the toast:

"To our victory. . ."

They all got up. I stood too, draining my glass and thinking of our victory over the fascist hordes that had treacherously invaded my land. Putting my glass back on the table, I too joined in the toast.

"To our victory. . ."

Heinemann looked at his watch. It was time for us to go. But the SS men were enjoying themselves and did not want any one to break up the party. In the end it was two o'clock before we could get away and I had to put my foot right down to get the little Opel to Ulanstrasse as quickly as possible. Sasha was already waiting for us and looking very worried. But when he got into the car and gave me a squeeze on the shoulder I knew that everything had gone well. We drove back to the embassy without any further difficulties.

The last time we saw Heinemann was July 2, the day we left Berlin. Saying good-bye, he hinted rather strongly that he understood the real reason for the journeys into town that we had made with his help.

"There may come a time," he said, "when I have to remind someone of the services I rendered to the Soviet embassy, so I hope they won't be forgotten. . ."

What happened to Heinemann afterwards I have no idea. Maybe he was killed during the war, maybe he is still alive. Maybe as an officer in the SS he had the blood of innocent victims on his hands and is hiding somewhere today from justice or has already paid the penalty for his crimes. But maybe he managed

to avoid getting involved in Gestapo brutalities. Who knows, it could be any of these things. But to do him justice it must be said that during those days we were in Berlin he did us, albeit not for nothing, a considerable service.

The Anti-Fascist Underground

There was one other reason why it was essential for us to get Sasha through the SS cordon and into town for at least a couple of hours.

Now more than fifteen years after his death (he died of a heart attack while playing tennis) I can say a bit more about him. Alexander Mikhailovich Korotkov was an experienced Soviet intelligence officer. Before being sent to Berlin he had successfully completed a number of important assignments and had earned a reputation for initiative, steadfastness, staunchness and devotion to duty. Korotkov had an excellent command of several foreign languages including German, which he spoke with a marked Austrian accent. His instructions in Berlin were to maintain contact with the German anti-fascist underground. This underground had first established contact with the Soviet embassy in 1936. Seeing the Soviet Union as the only real force capable of preventing the onslaught of fascism, they decided to pass to us information on secret German plans particularly those that related to German and Italian intervention in Republican Spain.

One of these underground organisations became known by the name "Rote Kapelle" (Red Choir), which it was called by the Abwehr (German military intelligence), who discovered its existence in 1942. In Abwehr jargon the word "choir" meant any underground organisation and secret radio transmitters were called "musicians". The members of such an organisation had names like "conductor", "pianist" and "violinist" according to the role they were thought by the Abwehr to play in the organisation. A radio operator, for instance, was called a "flutist". Since this particular underground organisation was known to have contacts with Moscow it was given the code name "The Red Choir". Many of its leaders were eventually caught and executed, including Harro Schulze-Boysen and Arvid Harnack. But for several years they saw their patriotic duty to lie in doing as much damage as

possible to the German military machine by passing valuable information to the Soviet Union.

And the organisation which included more than 200 people was extremely well placed to receive such information. Both Schulze-Boysen and Harnack, for example, who were the leaders of the Rote Kapelle had access to very secret communications.

Oberleutnant of Luftwaffe Harro Schulze-Boysen came from a Prussian officer's family and was related to Grossadmiral Tirpitz. He thus enjoyed the complete confidence of Hitler's commanding officers. While still a student, however, he had contacts with left-wing groups and German communists. In the early thirties he was chief editor of an anti-fascist magazine entitled *Der Gegner* (Opponent), but after Hitler came to power and the SA broke up the editorial office, Schulze-Boysen was imprisoned. Only the intervention of his highly placed relatives saved him and his participation in the anti-fascist movement was put down to "the errors of youth".

But on being released from prison Schulze-Boysen still continued his struggle against fascism, except that now he realised that the methods of struggle should be different. He became friendly with Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering, who liked the young officer from an aristocratic family and even agreed to be the best man at his wedding, which, of course, established Schulze-Boysen's reputation beyond doubt.

Having one of the top members of the Third Reich favourably disposed towards him opened the doors for Schulze-Boysen to enter the ministry of aviation and ultimately into the intelligence wing of the Luftwaffe. However, this brilliant career did not go to his head or distract him from his main goal which was the overthrow of the hated Nazi regime.

Another resolute opponent of fascism was Arvid Harnack. A doctor of both philosophy and law he had, before Hitler came to power, set up circles and seminars in Berlin to study scientific socialism. In his lectures and study groups he would call for friendship with the Soviet Union and warn the German people of the threat of fascism that was hanging over them. After the Nazis seized power the group of anti-fascists that centred round Harnack went underground.

As part of his conspiracy Arvid Harnack joined the Nazi party in 1935 and went to work in the ministry of the economy

where he soon became head of one of the departments. After establishing contact with Schulze-Boysen it was decided to merge their two groups into one organisation.

In possession of both military and economic information of a highly secret nature the two leaders became convinced that Hitler was planning war on the Soviet Union. They decided to set up a permanent contact with Moscow that could be kept up even after the outbreak of war. The most suitable means of maintaining such a contact was through coded radio transmission. Despite the difficulties and the enormous risk involved, everything was in operation by spring 1941.

The information which the organisation considered necessary to pass on to the Soviet Union in coded form represented an important addition to information already being received by Soviet counterintelligence.

The maintenance of this contact was of considerable importance. A few weeks before the German invasion one of the transmitters used by the Rote Kapelle had gone out of action. Some parts had to be replaced and the underground representatives had asked Sasha Korotkov to help them. A request was put through to Moscow and the necessary parts arrived at the embassy literally on the eve of the invasion. But before we had time to get it where it was needed the embassy was suddenly cut off from the outside world. And with the outbreak of war it was essential for the Soviet Union that this radio contact with the underground be maintained.

Thus the objective was to get Sasha outside the embassy so that he could meet with our friends from the German anti-fascist underground and give them what they needed to get their transmitter working again.

A considerable amount of valuable information was passed to Moscow from the anti-fascist German underground during the first years of the war. It covered both the situation in the Germans' rear and their military plans. Coded information was transmitted on the air concerning strategic raw materials supplies, aircraft production and the development of new weapons. In passing information that was important to the Soviet high command on such matters as the losses sustained by the Nazi armies, the planned offensives of the Wehrmacht and the placing of fascist spies and diversionists in the Soviet rear, our German anti-fas-

cist friends did their duty to the German people and to the whole of mankind.

It was only with great difficulty that the Abwehr and the Gestapo were able to uncover the underground anti-fascist organisation. Around late August-early September, 1942 Harro Schulze-Boysen, Arvid Harnack and many of their friends were arrested. They were tried *in camera* by a military tribunal. On December 22, 1942 they were hanged at Plötzensee Prison in Berlin. On the gallows they behaved heroically and when the rope was put around Arvid Harnack's neck, he called out that he regretted nothing that he had done and was dying a convinced communist. In his last letter before his death Harro Schulze-Boysen wrote that everything he had done had been done at the command of his reason, his heart and his convictions.

In the House on the Unter den Linden

The break through the cordon that we had effected with the help of Oberleutnant Heinemann allowed us to be more insistent in our negotiations with the German ministry of foreign affairs. Thus the pressure which Wilhelmstrasse continued to exert on us was to no avail. We were able to demand the evacuation of the whole Soviet colony, since we knew that the German diplomats would not be released from Moscow until this demand had been satisfied. But day after day went by and still the question remained unsolved.

One day on being called as usual to the Wilhelmstrasse I noticed that the man from the protocol department seemed very annoyed about something.

"Well," he said sharply, "have you chosen the people you want to be evacuated?"

I replied that we had not.

"You know, you are just wasting time. Reichsminister von Ribbentrop is most displeased. We cannot allow any further delays. Also we want the staff of the German embassy to leave Moscow as soon as possible."

Thus I understood that Ambassador Schulenburg and his staff had not left Moscow. And the irate tone of the man from the protocol department was one further affirmation of the fact

that Moscow had no intention of releasing them. The conclusion from this was clear: we had to stand firm and insist on what we wanted.

"We have no intention of selecting anyone", I replied calmly. "All Soviet citizens ought to be allowed to return to their country. We will not make any deals, and if you keep trying to persuade us otherwise, it is you who are wasting your time. We will not budge until our demands are met."

Once again he started to tell me that Germany would not agree to this and that only so many Soviet citizens should leave as there were German citizens in Moscow. The number of these persons was 120. Consequently, only 120 Soviet citizens could leave Berlin and a list of these names should be presented to the ministry without delay. Then the details of evacuation could be agreed upon.

To this there was nothing for me to do but repeat that the embassy would not change its mind: all Soviet citizens must return home. It was our duty to concern ourselves with all our people and we would not agree to abandon one thousand of them. They had all been working in Germany according to Soviet-German agreements and now we insisted that they all be sent home.

Each of us repeated our arguments, but we made no progress. Then the protocol man threatened that if the embassy would not agree to the German demand, then the German authorities themselves would make up a list of 120 persons for evacuation and find ways to compel the Soviet side to agree. At this I suggested that he should not lose sight of the fact that similar measures could be taken in respect of the German diplomats in Moscow. Thus having come to no agreement we parted.

On my way back to the embassy I reflected upon this conversation and thought that things might well take an unpleasant turn, because it would be difficult for us to insist on our position particularly in view of the absence of any permanent contact with Moscow. But when I got back there was some pleasant news awaiting me. The embassy staff had been listening to British radio and had heard a report that an agreement had been reached for Sweden to represent Soviet interests in Germany and Bulgaria to represent German interests in Moscow. My first thought was why the man from the protocol depart-

ment, who must undoubtedly have known about this agreement, had said not a word about it. And the answer was very likely because he had wanted to exert increased pressure on me over the question of exchange, since he knew that as soon as the intermediaries began work, it would be easier for us to insist on our position.

The cyphers and secret documentation in the embassy had all been destroyed on the first day of the war—a fact which the Germans undoubtedly guessed from the smoke that poured out of the embassy chimney. Nevertheless it was always possible that the Nazis might decide to violate the extraterritoriality of the embassy and send Gestapo agents into the embassy building. Therefore we were continually on the alert. We maintained a duty roster and kept the main gates carefully locked. Whenever the bell was rung, the man on duty would look through peephole to see if it was anything suspicious.

One night the bell did ring, loudly and continuously. The man on watch looked out through the peephole but could see nothing. He asked who was there but received no reply. Meanwhile the bell continued ringing. All the embassy senior staff were got out of bed and a discussion was held as to what to do. If we opened the gates the Germans might come pouring in, but if we left them close it meant putting up with the alarm-bell din which by now had aroused everyone in the embassy. People were gathering outside in the embassy courtyard and everyone was nervous. Something had to be done to stop it.

Finally we decided to open the wicket gate. Looking out onto the street I could see nothing. All was quiet. Some distance away a few soldiers were standing, but right by me an SS guard had dozed off to sleep on duty and was leaning against the bell. I shook him by the elbow and the bell ceased ringing as soon as he stood up. I pointed out to him what had happened and then closed the wicket gate again.

This small tragicomic incident is sufficiently indicative of the atmosphere of nervous tension in which we all were living at the time. However, throughout the whole ten days of our enforced stay in Berlin the Germans gave us no provocation whatsoever. Not the least reason for this was the fact that German diplomats were still being held in Moscow and the Nazis feared counter-measures.

All in all, despite the large number of people that were forced to live in the house on the Unter den Linden good order was maintained. At first, of course, many were anxious, especially those that had young children, and many others were distressed at the loss of their belongings, which they had had to leave behind in their flats. But people had not yet realised the full extent of the changes which had been brought into their lives by the war. But gradually things sorted themselves out and our trade union organisation did much to help this. Groups were organised to look after the children, to prepare the food, to clean the embassy, to organise political work and to provide information on what was happening. A small editorial group brought out a daily bulletin which contained information from TASS, the Sovinformburo and other reports from home. The Soviet people interned in the embassy behaved with dignity and courage. We all believed firmly in our ultimate victory and in the justness of our cause.

In Occupied Europe

When the Swedish intermediary finally arrived at our embassy he was handed the text of a telegram for dispatch to Moscow. The telegram outlined the steps we had taken to get all Soviet citizens out of Germany. In the evening of the same day we received a reply stating that the embassy had acted correctly in insisting on the return of all Soviet citizens and that this should be effected in exchange for the release of those Germans who were in the Soviet Union. The following day, as we were informed by the Swedish representative, a number of reports that were highly unflattering to Berlin appeared in the neutral press concerning the German attempt to detain part of the Soviet community in Germany. By now it had already become clear to the Germans that they would have to give in and the ministry of foreign affairs finally agreed to accept the list of Soviet workers and their families that were interned in either Germany or the occupied territories as originally drawn up by the embassy. We were then informed that all of them, including the chauffeur that had been detained on the first day of the war on his way to the post office, would be brought to Berlin

within the next few days and allowed to meet the Soviet consul and the Swedish diplomatic representative.

Two days later this promise was carried out and all the internees were brought to a camp on the outskirts of Berlin for our inspection. Housed in barracks and fenced in with barbed wire they were all hungry and poorly clothed, most of them being in pyjamas and carpet slippers or even bare-footed. We learned that on the night of June 21 the Gestapo burst into their flats and dragged them straight out of their beds. They were not allowed to take anything with them and they were sent under convoy straight to a concentration camp.

The Germans allowed us to feed them but not to bring them any clothes. Then, half-dressed they were loaded in sitting compartments of another train, which the Germans told us would follow the train with the Soviet diplomats.

The conditions for the internees were very poor, primarily as a result of the overcrowding. A person could only lie down when the other three that were sharing the bench stood up. There was very little to eat. Many caught colds through lack of warm clothing and at times, particularly on the journey through the Alps, it was very cold.

On checking through the list while still in the Berlin camp we discovered that there were three additional persons—a woman and two men. They had not been registered at our consulate and no one knew them although all three claimed that they were Soviet citizens working in Germany and were now returning home with the others. The Wilhelmstrasse representative also claimed that they were Soviet citizens working in Holland and they were included on the official German lists. Despite our protests they remained with the internees, and later it became clear who they were and what they wanted: when we arrived at the Bulgarian-Turkish border, all three declared that they refused to return to the Soviet Union. They were “choosing freedom” and deciding to remain in the Third Reich. The Nazi propaganda machine made an unbelievable commotion about this with newspapers and radio giving all the details of how “three members of the Soviet community refused to return to Bolshevik Russia and asked for political asylum in the German empire.”

The story was subsequently swallowed hook, line and sinker

by several press agencies in the neutral countries. But the bubble was not long in bursting. On our arrival in Istanbul we made a special declaration unmasking this latest act of Nazi provocation. We also informed Moscow that no Soviet citizens were involved, only some suspicious types which the Germans had managed to foist off on to us so as later to stage their "flight to freedom."

The departure of the Soviet community from Berlin, which was achieved through the mediation of Sweden, was set for July 2. The embassy staff were evacuated under normal conditions, in a special train with sleeper compartments for two. Our route went through Prague, Vienna, Belgrade and Sofia.

According to the agreement the exchange was to take place with the Soviet trains crossing the Bulgarian-Turkish border and the Germans' train crossing the Soviet-Turkish border at exactly the same time and under the observation of intermediaries. But when we had crossed Yugoslavia and were in Bulgaria, a representative from the protocol department of the ministry of foreign affairs, Baron von Bothmer, (he like the rest of the group of armed SS men had accompanied us from Berlin) informed us that he had received instructions from Berlin that the exchange was to be made not at the Bulgarian-Turkish border, but at the Yugoslav-Bulgarian border.

"You see, Bulgaria," he said, "is not an occupied country, it is only allied with Germany. Therefore in crossing into Bulgaria the Soviet trains are entering territory that is out of the control of the Reich. But since the German train has not yet arrived at the Soviet-Turkish border, the Soviet trains cannot go on any further. They will have to go back to Niš in Yugoslavia and await further instructions."

We protested but there was practically nothing we could do.

Soon our train stopped at some local halt, the engine was coupled from the opposite end and we moved off backwards. At the approaches to all stations SS men were standing on guard. They were also waiting for us at Niš, standing as usual facing the train with their legs apart, helmets on their heads and submachine-guns across their chests. And behind them the Yugoslav railway workers stood giving us quiet greetings and sometimes waving red flags.

At Niš we were put on to a siding and not permitted to get

off the train. Soon we learned that the other train with the Soviet internes on board had also arrived. The passengers were all taken off and put into a concentration camp that was located in an old barracks. It was several days before the Soviet consul and two other members of the diplomatic staff were allowed to visit them in this camp. During the five days they had been on the train they had got even thinner, some were ill and others had stomach upsets, but they were given no medical treatment. Only after our insistent demands was the embassy doctor allowed to visit the camp and examine the sick. We also managed to get some improvement in the diet they were being given.

Baron Bothmer Puts Out Feelers

The days we waited at Niš we were particularly worried about having no contact with Moscow. Since there was no Swedish representative there we could not rely on their mediation. We were afraid that by some oversight the German train might be allowed into Turkey. It would then be on neutral territory, while even if we entered Bulgaria we would still be to all intents and purposes in German hands, for though Bulgaria was technically an ally of Hitler's Germany, it was virtually in the position of an occupied country having powerful concentrations of German troops on its territory.

I was instructed to go to von Bothmer's carriage and once more state our protest against the German intention to make the exchange on the Yugoslav-Bulgarian border. We demanded that a Swedish representative be sent to us from Belgrade or Sofia so that we could communicate via him with Moscow.

Baron von Bothmer, a tall, lean man of middle age with a monocle in his right eye, was exceptionally courteous. Having listened to me he said that he would immediately convey our statement to Berlin and request new instruction. But, he went on to say, as for getting a Swedish representative this was hardly likely as there was none in Niš and it was impractical for one to be sent from Belgrade or from Sofia. Then he said he understood our anxiety, but could not act otherwise than in accordance with the instructions he had received from Berlin. As I

was about to go, he took out a bottle of Rheinwein and two glasses from a cupboard.

"I've wanted to have a word with you for a long time," he said as he poured out the wine, "but somehow I've not been able to get round to it. Perhaps you'll join me for a drink. After all, there's nothing else to do. . ."

Since it was clear that Bothmer wanted to tell me something I agreed to his suggestion. It might be worth finding out the reason for his excessive courtesy. He began with a bit of general chit-chat about the difficulties and complexities of our journey and assured me that he would do everything that personally depended on him to try and make things easier for us. He said he would be quite willing to help the Soviet internees but he was meeting with obstinacy on the part of the SS officer in charge of their guard. Therefore he could do little at the moment to improve the conditions of those Soviet citizens who were not travelling in the diplomatic train. Bothmer then began to speak about the latest news from the front and said that the Germans were meeting with strong resistance from the Soviet armies. Then he said:

"Can I be frank with you?"

"By all means," I replied.

"You see, I have always considered that it would be better for Germany and Russia to live in peace than to fight each other. The wars between us were always of benefit only to others and our countries had only suffered."

I told him that I shared his opinion and that the Soviet government had done everything in its power to avoid a conflict. In the present case Germany had begun the aggression and must bear the full responsibility.

"Let's not argue about who is responsible," said Bothmer, "I want to say something else. In Germany there are people, some of them highly influential, who do not want this war. At the moment, of course, when heavy fighting is going on on the front, this might sound odd. But ultimately we must look ahead, not back and think about what is going to happen. Perhaps the time will come when it will suit both sides to stop the fighting and settle our differences amicably. . ."

I replied again that the Soviet Union bore no responsibility for the war. Germany had treacherously invaded our country

and this left us with no choice but to repel the invader. We, I said, were convinced that we would win this war and that those who had invaded the Soviet Union would regret their actions bitterly. I could not, therefore, understand what peaceful settlement he had in mind.

"Well, you see," he continued, "I'm talking about a time which has not yet come, but which may well occur. You say that you are sure of victory. But the Führer on the other hand, thinks that it won't take long to finish off the Soviet Union. Now at the same time there are certain influential circles in Germany who see the situation differently. They think that neither side can win and if this happens a moment will come, (and it is likely to be not too far off) when both sides would consider it is better to settle the conflict peacefully. These circles in Germany would like this point of view to be known in Moscow. . .

In reply I said that as I saw it there could be no serious talk on the subject that Bothmer had raised so long as German troops remained on Soviet territory and at present they certainly did not look as though they would leave voluntarily. Thus there was no point in further discussing the point that Bothmer had raised.

Of course, I made a report on the feelers that Bothmer had put out and when I ultimately returned to Moscow completed a full report to the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs.

I had several other conversations with Baron Bothmer on this subject during the course of our journey and he reiterated his disapproval of the German invasion of the Soviet Union, making a special point of stressing that this was not only his own personal opinion, but that of influential circles in Berlin. He said once again that as a result of events on the front the time might come when both sides would find it necessary to stop fighting and bring about a peaceful settlement and then those persons to whom Bothmer was referring might have a definite role to play.

Obviously Bothmer was acting on the instructions of certain persons in Germany. Otherwise it is difficult to explain the risks he was taking by holding these conversations with me. He even went so far as to tell jokes about Hitler. One of these, which I had actually heard before in Berlin, went like this: Hitler is

inspecting a madhouse. All the inmates are lined up and when he enters they all raise their arms in the fascist salute and cry "Heil Hitler!" But one man standing on the side gives no reaction to the appearance of the Führer. Seeing this Hitler rushes up to him furiously and asks him why he has not greeted his Führer in the proper manner. "I'm sorry," replies the man, "but I'm not a madman, I'm the doctor."

The fact that already during the first weeks of the war certain influential Germans had decided to put out feelers via Bothmer seemed to be a fact of great significance.

Baron von Bothmer was undoubtedly one of the old-school diplomats, of whom there were still quite a few left in the ministry of foreign affairs. They served Hitler well, being obviously nationalists and persons who welcomed the Wehrmacht victories, but in their heart of hearts they were sickened by the crude methods of Ribbentrop's Nazi diplomacy. It was very likely that the ideas that Bothmer was putting forward were shared by many other older-generation politicians who had been very alarmed at Hitler's decision to invade the Soviet Union. This was shown in particular by the tragic fate of the former German ambassador in Moscow, Count von der Schulenburg. Pavlov who was present at the Kremlin when Schulenburg delivered the Soviet government the official declaration of war, said that the man made the statement with tears in his eyes. Then apparently he said on his own behalf that he thought Hitler's decision was madness. Schulenburg was later executed for his part in an unsuccessful plot against Hitler.

Waiting at Svilengrad

The last point to which the Soviet internees were accompanied by their SS guard was the Bulgarian border town of Svilengrad. Although Bulgaria had not officially declared war on the Soviet Union its government, being an ally of Hitler, virtually allowed the Nazis to exercise authority throughout their country. At Svilengrad we waited for two days while all the formalities relating to the crossing of the Soviet trains into Turkey were gone through. These formalities required the presence of our representatives, the Germans, the Bulgarians and the Turks.

Despite the difficulty of their situation, however, the Bulgarians did try and help us, but they were continually put down by the Germans.

Our carriages actually stood not at the station but some distance away from it in an open field near a small stream overgrown with high reeds. The weather was hot with the sun burning down on the carriages and the people naturally wanted to get out for a bit and refresh themselves in the stream. The Bulgarian officer in charge proposed taking groups of passengers out in turn to the stream so that they could get a breath of fresh air and refresh themselves. We were all set to do this, when suddenly the commander of the SS unit appeared. A tall, lanky man in a steel helmet with a medal on his chest, he jumped out of his carriage and waving his arms started shouting:

"Zurück! Zurück!"

"Who gave you permission to get out," he screamed turning to me.

I explained that the Bulgarian officer had allowed us to take the passengers out of the carriage to the stream and I nodded in the direction of the Bulgarian who was standing a little way away, but he remained motionless.

"I give the orders around here," bawled the SS man, "not him. And I forbid you to leave the carriages."

"But we are in Bulgaria now," I replied, "a country which is not at war with us. Here the Bulgarians are in charge and we've been allowed. . ."

His eyes flushed with blood.

"I'll show you who is in charge," he screamed. His hand went to his gun and the thought flashed through my mind that he might start shooting. But he managed to keep control of himself and only screamed in a spiteful falsetto: "We'll get you lot later, don't worry!"

Then turning to his soldiers he issued orders that no one should be allowed out of the carriages and then marched off to the end of the train past the Bulgarian officer who continued to stand there without moving. Only when his lanky figure had disappeared the Bulgarian officer came up to me, smiling guiltily and shrugging his shoulders.

"What can you do. . ."

"Nothing, I suppose," I replied and got back into my carriage.

One other event of note happened at Svilengrad. A wife from the Soviet trade mission in Berlin was due to give birth any day. She thought she would be able to get to Turkey before the baby was born, but suddenly there at Svilengrad she went into labour. The Bulgarians were very sympathetic and offered to take her to a hospital in the town as the baby could arrive at any moment. But the same lanky SS man categorically refused to give permission. So the Bulgarians called their own military doctor who came up immediately and ordered a tent to be made of reeds near the railway line. The mother-to-be was taken there and soon from behind the wall of reeds came the cry of the newborn baby. . .

When two days later we moved on and crossed the border into Turkey the number of Soviet citizens had increased by one.

In Neutral Turkey

One day after our arrival at Svilengrad the second train with the remaining members of the Soviet community came. We once again checked the lists and headed for Turkey.

When we finally arrived at the Turkish town of Edirne we saw new railway carriages waiting for us there. We were met by representatives of the Soviet embassy and consulate in Turkey. The local governor also came out to meet us and in the evening he held a reception in honour of the Soviet diplomats.

The next day new clothes were brought from Istanbul for the Soviet internees. In the afternoon we all left for Istanbul, the Soviet diplomats travelling by car and the rest of us boarding a train.

It was late in the evening when we arrived in Istanbul and the streets were already dark and deserted. Only the mosques' minarets gleamed in the bright moonlight. We stayed in the Soviet consulate which was situated in the middle of an old park. The next day was taken up with all the formalities relating to our evacuation home. In the port the snow-white steam-liner *Svanetia* was waiting where the ex-internees could have a short rest before going home. A group of diplomats, includ-

ing myself, went on to Ankara by train. But before boarding the night express we had to cross the Bosphorus on a launch. That evening the waters that separate Europe from Asia were tranquil and glowing a ruddy pink in the sunset. As we drew further and further away from the shore the magnificent dome and minarets of the Hagia Sophia, the largest mosque in Istanbul and a remarkable monument of Byzantine architecture, grew taller and taller before us.

At Ankara a special Soviet plane had been laid on for us...

The Return to Moscow

Having circled the roofs of Moscow our plane landed at the Central Airport, where now the main heliport is situated. It was in the afternoon of a sunny summer's day. When the engines died down and we descended the gangway onto the green grass of the airport, it was difficult to restrain our excitement. The silence everywhere seemed deceptive. All the time we had been thinking of nothing else but that our country was day and night engaged in fighting a bloody war. But here was the sweet smell of clover and the sight of larks flying peacefully over the fields. But once out on the Leningrad Highway we could see the ominous signs of war. Hanging on the butt-end of a building in such a way that it could not be missed was a huge placard showing the stern face of a Russian woman who was holding in her raised hand the text of the military oath. The inscription underneath the placard read: "Your Motherland Calls You". Several times our car had to slow down for groups of home-guards marching along the road. The fronts of the houses were painted with green and brown camouflage and strips of paper were stuck criss-cross across the windows. Thus the harsh face of Moscow in wartime appeared to us in the first hours of our return.

At night all the inhabitants of our block of flats were aroused by an air-raid warning. The women and children went into the cellar and the men went on to the roof. There I got my first war trophies—two small incendiary bombs extinguished with a bucket of sand.

The next day, Sunday, I was called to the foreign ministry. We had to sort out urgently the diplomatic pouch that we had

brought. Every hour the courier brought in TASS bulletins that contained communications from the telegraphic agencies. Most of them concerned the situation on the Soviet-German front. We could feel the whole world holding its breath as it followed the titanic struggle that was taking place all the way from the Barents to the Black Sea. It was not till the evening of that day that I had time for a break and I decided to go to the Metropol Restaurant for a meal. The huge hall was full and many were in military uniform. But on the whole it was not much different from peacetime.

When I returned we continued to sort out the post. We wrote reports and notes on the last days of the Soviet community in Berlin. Around midnight there was another air-raid alarm. I went out to Dzerzhinsky Square to the bomb-shelter in the metro. People were making their way down unhurriedly, their manner calm and serious. On the platform and on the rails people—mostly middle-aged with children—were already settling down for the night. But there were no sounds of anti-aircraft fire or bombs and children slept peacefully.

Finally, the "all-clear" was given. I returned to work as the dawn was already breaking in the east. From my room on the fourth floor of the foreign ministry building, which was then located on Kuznetsky Most I had a good view of a house burning somewhere on the far side of the Moskva River. The black smoke was rising in a column into the rosy-green sky. At four in the morning I went home. I drove a small, grey KIM—the first Soviet compact car to be produced which had only just come off the production lines at the Communist Youth International factory and was nothing like the modern Moskvitch—fast along the deserted streets. Twice I was stopped by military patrols who checked my documents. And after a few hours of uneasy sleep I was at work again by nine in the morning.

From the foreign ministry staff a home-guard detachment was made and every evening we went to the park in Mariina Roshcha for military exercises. Three times a week we took the electric train along the Yaroslavl railway for shooting practice in a small forest, and lying in trenches we would fire our rifles at plywood targets.

Opposite the metro entrance on Revolution Square a German Junkers bomber that had been shot down outside Moscow was

put on display. Obviously it had come down somewhere soft or had glided because the plane was almost whole, the only damage it had suffered was that the fuselage was slightly dented and one wing was broken. There were also a few large bombs on display, which had been defused. Passers-by stopped to look at the fascist plane with its black, sinister crosses and one could hear remarks like:

"If our boys can bring down a great heap like that, we'll show Hitler yet. . ."

But the Germans did not give up their nightly air-raids. And despite the stubborn resistance of our forces they continued to press further eastwards. The military reports of the Sovinformburo contained more and more names of towns and villages which were coming under enemy fire. The front got closer and closer to Moscow. Now everyone realised that the war would be a long one and that there were many many months of hard fighting ahead.

But during these first weeks of the war Moscow had already learned a lot and the defence of the capital had been considerably strengthened. Every evening the barrage balloons on long steel cables were raised over the city. The anti-aircraft flak also became noticeably stronger. All over the city teams worked incessantly to extinguish incendiary bombs and there were fewer fires. The city became active and alert. It seemed to personify the will of the Soviet people to fight the enemy and the faith of the people in their ultimate victory.

THE BIRTH OF THE COALITION

The Beginning

New Objectives

Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union radically changed the whole international situation. The Second World War which had begun as a struggle between two rival groups of imperialist powers now became a war against fascism for the liberation of enslaved peoples. And the conditions now existed for the formation of a military alliance between the USSR, Great Britain and the United States. But this alliance did not come about overnight. From the point of view of international law the anti-Hitler coalition between the three powers and a number of other states that were opposed to fascism had gone through several stages and finally materialised in the first half of 1942. Throughout that period the Soviet Union worked perseveringly towards creation of a military alliance between those countries that were at war with fascism.

From the moment Hitler invaded the USSR Soviet diplomacy was faced with a number of new objectives. The main goal was to ensure international conditions that would best promote the dealing of a serious blow to the enemy and ultimately bring about the liberation of occupied Soviet territory and a complete victory over the Axis powers. It was therefore the prime concern of Soviet diplomacy to ensure that the bourgeois states which were already fighting Nazi Germany and fascist Italy become close allies of the Soviet Union. This meant the creation and strengthening of a coalition of those states that were at war with Nazi Germany and the rapid opening of a second front in Europe. It was also necessary to ensure that those states which maintained official neutrality in the Soviet-German con-

flict (Japan, Turkey, Iran and a number of others) remained neutral. And this demanded no small measure of diplomatic skill.

Another task of Soviet foreign policy at that time was to assist in every possible way the peoples of Europe enslaved by fascism, who were fighting for their freedom and restoration of their sovereign rights. This task was outlined in the address of Joseph Stalin, head of the Soviet government and Chairman of the State Defence Committee, on 3 July 1941.

These objectives were also reflected in a declaration which was presented by the Soviet delegation to the Allied Conference in London in September, 1941. The declaration pointed out that all the peoples and states which had had to fight a war that had been forced upon them by Hitler's Germany should strive to bring about the rapid and decisive defeat of the aggressors and mobilise all their forces to this end. It also mentioned the need for a post-war world settlement which would deliver nations from the threat of fascism. The Soviet government expressed its confidence that as a result of the complete and final victory over Nazism the principles of international cooperation and friendship would be established in accordance with the wishes and aspirations of the freedom-loving peoples.

The achievement of these objectives was complicated by the fact that ruling circles in Britain and the United States were pursuing other aims in the war besides the defeat of the Axis powers. Of course, they wanted to beat Germany and its allies so as to eliminate the threat of German world hegemony and retain their own independence. But they also looked upon the weakening of that country as an imperialist rival and as a dangerous competitor on the world market, as a means of extending their own influence throughout the world so as to establish Anglo-American domination in the post-war world.

And the nearer the defeat of Germany came to being a reality the stronger these imperialist motives became in the policies of the Western powers. Churchill, who became British Prime Minister in May 1940, believed that the war would weaken the Soviet state and that the end of hostilities would leave the USSR dependent on Britain and the United States.

The Third Reich's victories in Western Europe and North

Africa, the fall of France, the occupation of Greece and Yugoslavia and the advance of the Axis powers across the Balkans towards the oil fields of the Middle East presented such an enormous danger to British imperialism that it became extremely difficult, if not impossible for Hitler's supporters in Britain to implement their long cherished plans for a deal with fascism and the organisation of a joint anti-Bolshevik crusade. Hitler and Mussolini had gone too far and struck too heavy a blow to the vital centres of British imperialism for any deal between the British government and the leaders of the Third Reich to be possible.

Hitler evidently thought that by launching a war against the Soviet Union he would atone for all his sins against the Western democracies. But he sadly miscalculated. The road to a new deal with the British Munichites was now closed. On June 22, 1941, the very day Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, the British government declared that it fully supported the struggle of the Soviet people against the enemy that had invaded its soil. This undoubtedly reflected the efforts of Soviet diplomacy. The Soviet government had not allowed itself to become involved in a discussion of the division of the "British possessions" as suggested by Hitler at the talks in Berlin in a bid to set Britain against the USSR and thereby prevent a future Soviet-British alliance against Germany. Consistently pursuing the Leninist foreign policy, the Soviet Union avoided international isolation and paved the way for cooperation with the Western powers in the struggle against the common enemy.

* * *

Of the staff of the Soviet embassy in Berlin who had lived through the beginning of the war in the summer of 1941 in the German capital a small group were required to stay on in the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, while the rest either went to serve in the army or home guard, or if they had some technical skills they went to work at the arms factories. I was asked to remain in the diplomatic service and work on matters concerned with Germany's European allies. A little later after I had been promoted to counsellor I was given Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan as well. Since I knew English as

well as German I was often asked to interpret at meetings between government and foreign ministry officials and British and American representatives. Thus it happened that I was present at the talks at which the anti-Hitler coalition was formed.

Of course, I was not able to be present at all the meetings and talks and therefore in writing about the formation of military cooperation between the three powers I can only partially rely on my personal recollections. Furthermore it is not my intention here to describe all the stages of this process, preferring to concentrate on just those events which I happened to witness. Obviously I have tried to retain the proper chronological order to show the development of relations between the three powers. In those cases where it seemed necessary and also where I deal with meetings at which I was not myself present I have introduced the appropriate documentation (publications from the British Foreign Office, the US State Department, the memoirs of a number of British and American politicians and also Soviet archive material).



In the period immediately preceding the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War Soviet relations with Britain and the United States were highly strained. The People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs naturally maintained contacts with British and American diplomats accredited in Moscow. Similar contacts were also kept up by the Soviet embassies in London and Washington. On the whole the period was characterised by attempts on both sides to probe the position of the other in respect of its attitude to Germany and its possible future military action.

On the actual day the Germans invaded the Soviet Union Sir Stafford Cripps, the British Ambassador in Moscow, was in London. He returned on June 27 at the head of a special military and economic commission.

That day he was received by Vyacheslav Molotov, Soviet People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, to whom Cripps presented the members of his mission. A declaration was read at the reception which expressed sympathy for the Soviet Union in its predicament and contained a number of somewhat vague promises of help.

After that Molotov and Cripps held talks in the course of which the latter was asked how the British government envisaged that the mission would cooperate with the Soviet Union. Cripps replied that the members of the mission should have contact with Soviet military personnel, but he stressed that the military part of the mission did not depend upon him. As for economic matters, he thought contact should be made with Anastas Mikoyan. Cripps made no mention at all of any political preconditions for the talks between the British mission and its Soviet counterparts, a fact which was noted by the Soviet side.

The Soviet People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs promised an early answer and expressed the wish that no furor should be made in the British press about the mission's visit to Moscow. Cripps promised to take measures in this respect.

Then the conversation turned to other subjects. The Ambassador was asked to inform the Soviet leaders about what was happening to Rudolph Hess and why he had decided to fly to England. Cripps replied that in the past Hess had been linked with pro-Nazi circles in Britain and thought that he could do a deal with these people and conclude a separate peace. Cripps said that he was convinced that Hess had not come to England without Hitler's knowledge.

"At the present moment," said the Ambassador in conclusion, "no one in Britain is interested in Hess. The British government has allowed various rumours to circulate about Hess and has purposely made no official declaration so as to keep the Germans in ignorance. . ."

In fact Cripps could have said more about the Hess affair, for in London there was by no means the kind of indifference to his flight that Cripps would have the Soviet representative believe.

A serious rift had formed among ruling circles in Britain over Hess and his mission. And at one stage British politicians were even ready to make a public announcement that the aims of his flight were to conclude an agreement between London and Berlin on the basis of anti-communism and a firm undertaking from Hitler that he would invade the Soviet Union.

Such an announcement might have brought about a new situation in Anglo-German intrigues and made a deal between

the two countries more possible. But the whole international situation and particularly the fact that Britain was now at war with Germany and the British public was becoming increasingly opposed to fascism made this highly unlikely. Churchill was hesitant. But Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union had altered the situation radically. Ruling circles in Britain saw that another possibility faced them. They could act together with the Soviet Union not only to avert the threat of Nazi invasion that was still hanging over Britain, but also to defeat the Third Reich, which was now seen as offering a serious threat to the interests of the British Empire.

The Anglo-Soviet Agreement

During the course of the talks between Ambassador Cripps and People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs Molotov the position of the United States was discussed. Cripps stated that a week before the German invasion of the Soviet Union he had asked Churchill to contact Roosevelt and discuss with him the possibility of such an invasion. He also mentioned confidentially that Churchill, himself, and Winant, who had been US Ambassador in London had together composed the speech which the British Prime Minister broadcast on June 22 as soon as it became known that Germany had invaded the Soviet Union. Winant had been very pleased with Churchill's speech because it in his opinion reflected the views of Roosevelt. Molotov asked whether Hess had warned the British about the forthcoming invasion of the USSR. Cripps said that he had not and that London had received its information from other sources. Here it is difficult to believe the British Ambassador.

In the evening of June 27 a second meeting took place between Cripps and Molotov. The People's Commissar said that the proposals made by the Ambassador had been conveyed to the Soviet government which was now interested to learn the scale and size of the aid which the two sides might offer each other.

"The British government," replied Cripps, "is prepared to do everything in its power to effect cooperation between our two countries. I see nothing which could limit the scope of

possible economic aid and I can see no limits to the aid that is necessary for the achievement of our common goal."

Molotov stated that mutual aid should be fixed according to an agreement on a definite political basis which would serve to bring about a military and political rapprochement between the two countries. Cripps replied evasively but to the general effect that it was unlikely that the British government would be ready to make a political accommodation with the USSR. This reply was not to the liking of the Soviet side, which considered that in the present situation when both countries were faced with a common enemy consideration should be given not only to the specific issues of the moment, but also to the problem of broader military and political cooperation. Molotov asked Cripps whether he correctly understood him to mean that the British government considered cooperation on special matters possible at the present moment, but did not intend to achieve full military and political cooperation. Cripps replied that he thought it was more necessary to achieve cooperation on military and economic matters and this would create a base for political cooperation.

On June 29 Molotov received Cripps once more. Referring to information from London on recent talks between the Soviet Ambassador Maisky and Lord Beaverbrook, a member of the British War Cabinet, Molotov raised the question of increasing British air attacks against Germany, and in Western Europe in general, and also about the landing of troops in France, for it was the possibility of such operations that Beaverbrook had discussed with Maisky. Cripps had undoubtedly been informed about the meeting between the Soviet Ambassador and Beaverbrook and instructed on what to say should such a question be raised, for without hesitating he replied:

"In principle His Majesty's government is prepared to do everything it can to aid the Soviet government. However the Royal Navy is unable to undertake such an operation since we do not know what it will actually amount to. Consequently, we can say nothing definite about such operations of our armed services as would make the situation easier on the Soviet front.

Thus we can see that despite statements from Churchill and members of his cabinet to the effect that the British govern-

ment was ready to render extensive aid to the Soviet Union, in practice no concrete steps were taken.

During his meeting with members of the British military mission on June 30, 1941 Molotov again mentioned the desirability of stepping up British air attacks in West Germany and in occupied France and also the landing of troops in the region mentioned by Beaverbrook. This time the reply was given by General MacFarlane who stated that his task consisted in getting as soon as possible detailed information on the activity and plans of the Soviet troops. Then, apparently, the British chiefs-of-staff would work out a corresponding plan of operations.

In the end, however, the Soviet government did manage to persuade the British government to come to an agreement which would not be purely technical. On July 13, 1941 the Agreement for Joint Action by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in the War against Germany was signed in the Kremlin. The importance of this document was emphasised by the fact that on the Soviet side Stalin, head of the Soviet government, Boris Shaposhnikov, Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, and Admiral Nikolai Kuznetsov, People's Commissar for the Navy, together with other officials were all present at the signing. Present on the British side were Sir Stafford Cripps, the British Ambassador, members of the staff of the British Embassy in Moscow and members of the British mission. The agreement which was written in both Russian and English was signed on behalf of the Soviet Union by People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs Molotov, and on behalf of Great Britain by Ambassador Cripps. The agreement said, in part, that (1) the two governments undertook to assist each other in every possible way in the war against Hitlerite Germany; and (2) they further undertook that in the course of the war they would neither negotiate nor conclude any armistice or peace treaty except with their mutual consent.

This agreement can be considered as the beginning of the anti-Hitler coalition.

And it really was only a beginning. The British were reluctant to bind themselves to any military and political undertakings. This was largely due to the fact that the opinion predominated among British military experts and politicians that the

Soviet Union would not withstand the might of the German military machine, backed up as it was by the industrial potential of almost the whole of Western Europe. Military specialists in London did not believe that the Red Army could hold out against Hitler for much longer than five or six weeks.

The Visit of Harry Hopkins

Similar evaluations of the Soviet Union's ability to withstand Hitler's Germany were also being made in the United States. The only difference being that the military strategists in Washington gave the "Russian resistance" even less time. Roosevelt, however, did not entirely trust these forecasts and so in order to get first-hand information he decided to send Harry Hopkins as his special representative to Moscow. At the time Hopkins was in Britain and Roosevelt instructed him to fly directly to the Soviet Union. After almost a two day flight from Scotland to Arkhangelsk on a British plane Hopkins arrived in Moscow in the afternoon of July 28.

At the Central Airport on the Leningrad Highway a group of diplomats and military personnel gathered to meet Hopkins. The group included not only official Soviet representatives, but also staff from the United States and British embassies and the naval and military attachés from these countries. The sun was baking hot and the party that had gathered to meet Hopkins stood in the shade of an awning on the airport terrace.

Finally, it was announced that the plane was due to land. Everyone looked up in the sky where we could already hear the noise of the engines. Circling the airport once the plane landed and rolling slightly taxied over to the waiting group. As the engines died down and the doors opened, the gangway was lowered and the lean figure of a man in a crumpled suit that was slightly too big for him appeared. His neck seemed too thin for the great high-foreheaded, balding head it supported. But the eyes looked intelligent and penetrating and the big mouth was lit up in a smile. This was Harry Hopkins, the special representative and personal friend of President Roosevelt. On the conclusions that this man would draw would largely depend the subsequent policy of the United States. His brief

was to collect on-the-spot information and report to Washington as to whether the Soviet Union was capable of standing up to Hitler or whether the war on the Soviet-German front would turn into the same fascist Blitzkrieg that had been seen all over Europe. Depending on the answer that Hopkins gave to these questions the White House would formulate its policy towards the Soviet Union, which was now the latest victim of Nazi aggression.

Immediately after Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union the US administration had come out with a statement condemning it as an act of aggression. In a speech at a press conference on June 24, 1941 Roosevelt had stated that all those including the Soviet Union who resisted the Axis powers would receive US support. But a declaration in words was one thing, concrete measures to effect that support were something else. In both the United States and Britain there were influential circles that had encouraged the fascist aggressors in the pre-war period and set them against the Soviet Union. Account had to be taken of the fact that these forces would continue to resist US-Soviet cooperation or try to ensure that it would be limited to merely expressions of sympathy while doing all they could to prevent practical help being given to the Red Army which was struggling heroically against the fascist hordes. It was as a counterpoise to the influence of these circles, which, as it happened, was to make itself felt throughout the whole course of the war, that Roosevelt hoped to put the conclusions of such an experienced and prestigious politician as Harry Hopkins and his report was carefully studied by the State Department.

Hopkins who was accompanied by two military advisers spent several days in Moscow. During that time he met the leaders of the Soviet government, received detailed information about the situation at the Soviet-German front and saw with his own eyes the determination of the Soviet people to fight for victory. This determination left a profound impression on him.

In the evening of the day he arrived, Harry Hopkins was received by Stalin and the conversation which he had with the Soviet head of state was outlined by Hopkins in his memo which is now to be found among the White House archives.

"I told Mr. Stalin that I came as personal representative of the President. The President considered Hitler the enemy of

mankind and that he therefore wished to aid the Soviet Union in its fight against Germany.

"I told him that my mission was not a diplomatic one in the sense that I did not propose any formal understanding of any kind or character.

"I expressed to him the President's belief that the most important thing to be done in the world today was to defeat Hitler and Hitlerism. I impressed upon him the determination of the President and our Government to extend all possible aid to the Soviet Union at the earliest possible time.

"I ... explained my relationship to the Administration in Washington. I told him further that I just left Mr. Churchill in London who wished me to convey to him the sentiments which I had already expressed from the President.

"Mr. Stalin said he welcomed me to the Soviet Union...

"Describing Hitler and Germany, Mr. Stalin spoke of the necessity of there being a minimum moral standard between all nations, and, without such a minimum moral standard nations could not co-exist. He stated that the present leaders of Germany knew no such minimum moral standard and that therefore, they represented an anti-social force in the present world. The Germans were a people, he said, who without a second's thought would sign a treaty today, break it tomorrow and sign a second one the following day. Nations must fulfill their treaty obligations, he said, or international society could not exist.

"When he completed his general summary of the Soviet Union's attitude toward Germany he said 'therefore our views coincide.'

"I told Mr. Stalin that the question of aid to the Soviet Union was divided into two parts. First, what would Russia most require that the United States could deliver immediately and, second, what would be Russia's requirements on the basis of a long war?

"Stalin listed in the first category the immediate need of, first, anti-aircraft guns of medium calibre ... together with ammunition. He stated that he needed such medium calibre guns because of the rapidity of their fire and their mobility... Second, he asked for large size machine-guns for the defense of his cities. He stated that he needed one million or more such rifles.

I asked Mr. Stalin if he needed ammunition for these rifles and he replied that if the calibre was the same as the one used by the Red Army 'We have plenty'.

"In the second category, namely, the supplies needed for a long-range war, he mentioned first high octane aviation gasoline, second, aluminum for the construction of airplanes... At this point in the conversation Mr. Stalin suddenly made the remark, 'Give us anti-aircraft guns and the aluminum and we can fight for three or four years.'

"...Mr. Stalin stated that he would be glad if we would send any technicians that we could to the Soviet Union to help train his own airmen in the use of these planes... Mr. Stalin said the plane he needed particularly was the short-range bomber, capable of operating in a radius of 600 to 1100 kilometres or with a total range of 1200 to 2200 kilometres.

"I asked Mr. Stalin what he thought was the best route to ship supplies from the United States to the Soviet Union. Mr. Stalin stated that the Persian Gulf-Iranian route was not good because of the limited capacity of the Iranian railways and highways... Mr. Stalin believed that the Archangel route was probably the most practicable... I told Mr. Stalin that my stay in Moscow must be brief. I wished to accomplish as much as possible in the short time which I had at my disposal. I asked Mr. Stalin whether he wished to carry on the conversations personally or would prefer that I would discuss some of the details with other representatives of the Soviet Government. I said that, of course, I would prefer to confer directly with him but I realized he had a great many responsibilities at the moment...

"Mr. Stalin replied, 'You are our guest; you have but to command.' He told me he would be at my disposal every day from six to seven. It was then agreed that I confer with representatives of the Red Army at ten o'clock that night.

"I reiterated to Mr. Stalin the appreciation of the people of the United States of the splendid resistance of the Soviet Army and of the President's determination to do everything to assist the Soviet Union in its valiant struggle against the German invader.

"Mr. Stalin replied with an expression of gratitude of the Soviet Government."¹

¹ *FRUS. Diplomatic Papers, 1941, Vol. I, pp. 803-805.*

The next day after talks with General (later Marshal of Artillery) Yakovlev and other Red Army generals Hopkins met the British Ambassador, Sir Stafford Cripps. Their talks mainly centred round the forthcoming meeting between Roosevelt and Churchill in the light of recent events on the Soviet-German front. As Hopkins noted, both men expressed the desirability of the President and the Prime Minister sending a communiqué to Stalin at the end of their conference (the conference at which, incidentally, the Atlantic Charter was drawn up). The note which was sent two weeks later contained the following statement: "We have taken the opportunity afforded by consideration of the report of Mr. Harry Hopkins on his return from Moscow to consult together as to how best our two countries can help your country in the splendid defence that you are putting up against the Nazi attack."

In the afternoon of July 31 Harry Hopkins and the US Ambassador, Laurence Steinhardt had a meeting with Molotov in the Kremlin. The discussion chiefly centred around the situation in the Far East. As Hopkins noted in his diary, he had the impression that the Soviet side was trying hard to prevent the situation on its Far Eastern borders from deteriorating and to avoid a war with Japan. Hopkins also drew the conclusions from these talks that it would be desirable for the United States to issue some kind of warning to Japan that if it were to invade the Soviet Union the United States would aid the victim of aggression.

The Needs of the Front and the Prospects for the War

In the evening of the same day Harry Hopkins was again received by Stalin and the talks at which Maxim Litvinov interpreted lasted for three and a half hours.

"I told Mr. Stalin that the President was anxious to have his—Stalin's—appreciation and analysis of the war between Germany and Russia. Mr. Stalin outlined the situation as follows: . . . he believes that Germany can mobilize 300 divisions. . . Mr. Stalin stated that he can mobilize 350 divisions and will have that many divisions under arms by the time the spring campaign begins in May 1942. He is anxious to have as many

of his divisions as possible in contact with the enemy, because then the troops learn that Germans can be killed and are not supermen. This gives his divisions the same kind of confidence that a pilot gets after his first combat in the air ... he wants to have as many seasoned troops as possible for the great campaign which will come next spring... The Russians therefore have many 'insurgent' troops which operate behind Germany's so-called front line ... these 'insurgent' troops are proving a great menace to the German offensive... He believes that Germany underestimated the strength of the Russian Army... He repeatedly emphasized the large number of men Germany was forced to use for this purpose, and believes that the Germans will have to go on the defensive themselves... They are burying many of their large tanks in the ground for defensive purposes. The Russians have already found 50 such defensive positions. Mr. Stalin stated that in his opinion Hitler fears that he has too many men on the Russian front. [The Germans have exposed their positions in the West.] He believes that the morale of his own troops is extremely high, and realizes that this is partly due to the fact that they are fighting for their homes and in familiar territory. He said that Germany has already found that 'moving mechanized forces through Russia was very different from moving them over the boulevards of Belgium and France'. Stalin said that the Russian Army had been confronted with a surprise attack; he himself believed that Hitler would not strike... Hitler made no demands on Russia ... he [Stalin] took all precautions possible to mobilize his army ... they were forced to organize a defensive line of battle. Now the Russians were counter-attacking at many points...

"He [Stalin] believes that his largest tanks are better than the other German tanks, and that they have repeatedly shown their superiority... He emphasized the fact that Germany has a strong and powerful air force ... but the quality of many of the German planes is not first-class... The Russians have experienced no trouble in destroying these planes... He ... indicated that about 75 per cent of the sum total of his munitions plants ... were in the general areas of which Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev were the centers... Stalin said they ... were moving many machine tools eastward to escape the bombing attacks ... he believed that they had large reserves of food,

men, supplies and fuel... He thought one weakness the British had was underrating their enemy; he did not propose to do this. He, therefore, thinks that so far as men, supplies, food and fuel are concerned the German Army is capable of taking part in a winter campaign in Russia... He expressed great confidence that the line during the winter months would be in front of Moscow, Kiev and Leningrad—probably not more than 100 kilometres away from where it is now...

"He told me that the first need of the Russian Army was light anti-aircraft guns... to give protection to their lines of communications against low flying planes. His second great need was aluminum needed in the construction of airplanes. The third was machine-guns... He stated that he needed large anti-aircraft guns for the defense of cities."

Hopkins asked whether the Russians had seen any Italian divisions or Franco's volunteers at the front, as had been reported in the Western press. Stalin smiled at this question and said that Soviet soldiers did not mind meeting Italians or Spaniards who did not present much in the way of danger. Their main enemies were the Germans.

Hopkins said that the governments of Great Britain and the United States wanted to do everything they could in the coming weeks to provide the Soviet Union with the materials it needed. But first they had to manufacture them and, secondly, time was required for their delivery. It was therefore unlikely that anything serious could be done until late autumn. It was easier, he said, to make plans for a protracted war. But to carry out the long-term plans the US government needed to know not only the military position in Russia, but also the types, quantity and quality of its weaponry as well as its raw material resources and production capacities. He added that the United States and British governments would hardly start sending heavy weaponry like tanks, planes and anti-aircraft guns to the Russian front before a conference of representatives of the three governments had been held to study the respective strategic interests on each front and the interests of each country fully and jointly. Since heavy fighting was going on the Soviet front, it seemed unlikely, Hopkins said, that Stalin would be able to devote the time to such a conference before the situation had stabilised. Stalin replied that the front would stabilise

not later than October 1. In his diary Hopkins noted that in the situation as it stood at the time he considered the holding of such a conference to be inexpedient. He advised postponing its date and calling it only when the outcome of the battles now going on became clear.

Thus, although Hopkins did not share the pessimistic prognoses of the American high command which doubted the ability of the Red Army to withstand the Nazi attack, he was nevertheless not confident that the Soviet Union would manage to stabilise the front in a short time. Therefore he advised postponing the conference so as not to involve the United States and Britain in any definite undertakings. Ultimately agreement was reached to hold such talks between October 1 and 15.

Hopkins wrote of his trip to the Soviet Union and his talks with the head of the Soviet government that they were the turning point in relations between Britain and the United States on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other.

At a press conference on July 31, just before leaving Moscow, Hopkins stated that in his meetings with the Soviet leaders he had discussed the situation in the Soviet Union in connection with the war with Germany, and on the instructions of Roosevelt had informed Stalin that "Whoever fights against Hitler is on the right side ... and the United States will help that side."

"I told Stalin," Hopkins continued, "that we were following the struggle that the Soviet Union was waging in self-defence with the greatest admiration..."

Stalin asked Hopkins to convey his gratitude to President Roosevelt for the offer of help and said that the President and the American people could rely on the Soviet people to play a decisive role in the defeat of Hitlerite Germany.

Harry Hopkins left Moscow with a quite definite and positive impression about the Soviet Union. Despite the gloomy warnings of military experts in Washington Hopkins came to the conclusion that the Soviet Union was capable not only of withstanding the enemy onslaught, but also of subsequently inflicting him serious blows. Hopkins' report to the government and personally to the president did much to determine the subsequent policy of the Roosevelt administration in aiding the Soviet Union in its struggle against fascist aggression.

His visit opened the way for the American government to take practical steps in this direction. Nevertheless, the rendering of real aid, the actual deliveries, still took quite a long time. Obviously in the conditions that then existed with the long distances involved, and the fact that hostilities were going on in the Atlantic Ocean, the North Sea and on the European continent making such deliveries was far from easy. But even so, the preparations took too long a time, largely due to the hesitance that was still felt among ruling circles in the West, who were continually watching events on the Soviet-German front and who were not as yet fully confident that the Soviet people were capable of withstanding the Nazi aggression.

Harry Hopkins' visit to Moscow and his sober analysis of the situation played a positive role ultimately favouring the development of the anti-Hitler coalition.

Of definite practical importance in this respect was the visit of General (later Marshal of the Soviet Union) Golikov at the head of a delegation of Soviet military experts to Great Britain and the United States.

An Evening at the Metropol

Members of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, who had returned from abroad and had no place to live in Moscow, were housed in the empty buildings of foreign embassies whose staff had left Moscow, because their countries either sided with Nazi Germany or were occupied by the Axis powers. I and a number of other colleagues were given rooms in a mansion in Ostrovsky Pereulok, which had been one of the Skandinavian embassies. The former tenants had taken their furniture with them and we were provided with folding beds, tables and chairs from the People's Commissariat that were no longer in use because they were too old. Now they came in handy for furnishing the empty buildings that had been given over to the People's Commissariat staff that were without flats.

One evening in August 1941 I went to have dinner at the Metropol Restaurant. There were many people there and most of them were servicemen. The orchestra was playing and several couples were dancing round the pool. Unable to find a free place I was about to leave when I suddenly heard some-

one call my name. Under one of the standard lamps to the right of the orchestra a group of three men were sitting, one of whom I immediately recognised. This was an old acquaintance of mine—Valentin Petrovich Seletsky. The other two who were in uniform I did not recognise, but later it turned out that we had returned home together from Germany after the outbreak of the war. They had been in another echelon, among those who were not on the embassy staff but had worked in Germany or in one of the occupied countries.

I remembered that we had met in Niš in Yugoslavia when our two trains had stopped for several days and the consul, Koroлев, and myself had been allowed by the Germans to visit the Soviet internees who were in the other train.

I sat at their table and ordered dinner. Naturally our conversation turned to the one subject that concerned everybody—the situation at the front. These two army officers had returned to Moscow for several days from the South-Western Front where they had seen very heavy fighting. In a number of places the invaders had reached the Dnieper and Kiev was threatened. But the enemy's advance was bought at a high price and the Nazis suffered enormous losses.

We could not help thinking, of course, of the terrible fate of those who had not managed to get out in time and had fallen under the fascist yoke. Having worked in Germany we had frequently come across evidence of the pathological hatred that the Nazis felt for the Soviet people and for Communists. And we knew all about the brutal reprisals that were carried out in the occupied territories.

At one time I had worked with Seletsky in the USSR Trade Mission in Berlin and for several months in 1940 we had been at the Krupp factory in Essen checking equipment which had been bought by the USSR under the Soviet-German economic agreement. On Sundays we frequently went for walks around the locality.

Since that year May Day (Hitler had announced it a labour holiday for demagogic reasons) was immediately followed by Easter we had decided to use the holidays for a trip along the Rhine. Arriving at Rüdesheim by train, we set off on foot across the vineyards to Godesberg where we arrived late in the evening. As part of our trip we had decided to stay at the Dresden

Hotel, where during the preparations for the Munich deal Hitler and Mussolini had met their Western partners.

To our surprise when we got to the hotel we saw that the vestibule was full of SS men. We went up to the desk, showed our passports and I asked if we could have two rooms for the night. Before the manager had time to reply a big SS man was suddenly standing behind me.

"Who are they?" came the rude voice.

The manager nervously handed the SS man our passports with the hammer and sickle. He took one look at them and without even turning to us barked:

"They shouldn't be here. Tell them to clear off. There are no free rooms." And he threw our passports down on the desk.

I turned to him and said in an even-tempered voice:

"A little politeness wouldn't hurt, you know. Or perhaps you've forgotten that normal relations exist between our two countries. . ."

The bull-neck of the SS man flushed red. He looked as if he was about to take a swing at me. But he got a grip on himself and muttered something about how we'd soon find out what relations existed between our countries. . . Then he turned abruptly on his heels and walked away.

The manager in an apologetic tone explained to us that a rally was being held in Godesberg for one of the SS units and therefore all the rooms in the hotel were taken. But he gave us the address of a private house where we could get rooms and we ended up spending the night there.

Having breakfasted in the morning at a small cafe we set out once again to walk along the undulating banks of the Rhine. It was a bright sunny day but we were enveloped in a green haze. Suddenly the quiet of the countryside was shattered by the drunken cries of a gang of Wehrmacht soldiers and a couple of girls. They were all pretty far gone and one was drinking beer as he walked, splashing it all over his tunic. A girl was poking him in the chest and laughing inanely. We kept well out of their way, and as they went by Seletsky said that he just couldn't believe that a crowd of drunken slobs like that might one day invade our country.

We had no idea that that "one day" was so near at hand.

Now, sitting at our table in the Metropol we remembered

that trip along the Rhine and other things we had seen in Germany that foreboded a terrible time of trial for the Soviet people.

When we left the Metropol my companions hurried off about their business. I still had more than an hour before I had to return to work. It was a quiet, warm night and the moon was shining brightly so I decided to go for a walk. I went along Okhotny Ryad and then on to Mokhovaya, turning to Volkhonka at the end and returning to the centre by way of Gogol Boulevard and Frunze Street. Several times I was stopped by a patrol which checked my documents, and this was the only thing that suggested that we were at war. Otherwise Moscow might have been plunged into a deep and trouble-free slumber. Not a glimmer of light came from the blacked-out windows and the streets were dark and completely deserted. The only light came from the moon against which the silhouettes of the tall buildings, looked pitch-black. But this atmosphere was deceptive. Out there in the West, the rumble of the guns in the fierce battles was unceasing, and here, in Moscow, behind the blacked-out windows people toiled day and night giving all their effort to the common cause—the defeat of the enemy.

The First Trial

The Beaverbrook-Harriman Mission

An important stage in the development of relations between the three major participants in the anti-Hitler coalition was marked by the talks which were held in late September-early October 1941 during the visit to Moscow of the Anglo-American mission which was headed by Lord Beaverbrook (Great Britain) and Averell Harriman (USA). In essence this was the first, tripartite conference and it was devoted to discussion of the practical problems involved in Anglo-American-Soviet cooperation. Its decisions were to be of considerable practical importance.

Beaverbrook and Harriman arrived at the port of Arkhangelsk on the British cruiser HMS *Lincoln* and were met by F. F. Molochkov, head of the Protocol Department of the

People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, and by Colonel Yevstigneyev and Captain 1st Rank Zaitsev, chiefs of the external relations departments of the People's Commissariats of Defence and the Navy. On September 28 Beaverbrook and Harriman arrived at the Central Airport in Moscow to be met by the First Deputy People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs A. Ya. Vyshinsky, the People's Commissar of the Navy Admiral N. G. Kuznetsov, General F. I. Golikov and the general secretary of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs A. A. Sobolev together with other officials.

Before the immobile line of the guard of honour the national anthems of Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union (which was the *Internationale* then) were played. The National Hotel in Moscow was put at the disposal of the delegates while the meetings were held in the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs building on Spiridonovka (now Alexei Tolstoy Street). In the event of an air-raid the delegation members could use the Revolution Square Metro station as an air-raid shelter. All members of the delegation were given special passes allowing them to be out at night later than the midnight curfew.

The conference worked daily from 12 noon until 5 p.m. when there was a short break for lunch. After lunch there was an extensive sight-seeing programme which included visits to the cinema, the theatre, concerts, industrial enterprises and various institutions. In particular the programme included a visit to the Moscow Automobile Factory, the Ballbearing Plant, the TsAGI enterprises, a military hospital and a meat factory. The theatrical programme included: *Cherevichki*, *Swan Lake*, *Yevgeny Onegin*, *Ruslan and Lyudmila* and *Romeo and Juliet* at the Bolshoi; *Anna Karenina* and *School for Scandal* at the Moscow Art Theatre; *General Suvorov* at the Central Theatre of the Red Army; *The Forest*, *Othello*, *Uriel Acosta* at the Maly Theatre and *Field Marshal Kutuzov* at the Vakhtangov Theatre. There was also a football match at the Moscow Dynamo Stadium.

The official purpose of Beaverbrook and Harriman's mission was to establish the concrete needs of matériel of the Soviet Union and reach agreement with the Soviet Government on possible deliveries.

On the very first day of their arrival in Moscow Harriman and Beaverbrook were received by Stalin and Harriman handed Stalin the text of a personal message from President Roosevelt which read:

"My dear Mr. Stalin,

"This note will be presented to you by my friend Averell Harriman, whom I have asked to be head of our delegation to Moscow.

"Mr. Harriman is well aware of the strategic importance of your front and will, I know, do everything that he can to bring the negotiations in Moscow to a successful conclusion.

"Harry Hopkins has told me in great detail of his encouraging and satisfactory visits with you. I can't tell you how thrilled all of us are because of the gallant defense of the Soviet armies.

"I am confident that ways will be found to provide the material and supplies necessary to fight Hitler on all fronts, including your own. I want particularly to take this occasion to express my great confidence that your armies will ultimately prevail over Hitler and to assure you of our great determination to be of every possible material assistance.

"Yours very sincerely,

"Franklin D. Roosevelt."

In the course of the talks which are reproduced in documents of the US Department of State the Soviet side gave a detailed report on the position at the Soviet-German front and also set forth its urgent military requirements. The British and American representatives said what could be immediately made available to the Soviet Union from their stocks.

Stalin reviewed the military situation and added that the Germans would strive for superiority in tanks since without tank support the German infantry was weak in comparison with the Soviet infantry. Thus Stalin put tanks as the first essential requirement of the Soviet Union and anti-tank weapons as the second. Then came medium-range bombers, anti-aircraft guns, fighters and reconnaissance planes and barbed wire.

Addressing Beaverbrook, Stalin stressed the significance of Britain's more active actions and military cooperation with the Soviet Union.

Stalin also suggested to Beaverbrook that the British might send troops to join the Red Army in defending the Ukraine.

Beaverbrook replied that a build-up of British divisions in Iran was under way and that these troops might be sent to the Caucasus in case of need.

Stalin rejected this offer decisively saying:

"There is no war in the Caucasus but there is in the Ukraine. . . ."

Beaverbrook suggested that the Soviet and British general staffs might open the strategic discussions. Harriman raised the question of using Siberian airports to deliver American aircraft to the Soviet Union by way of Alaska. Stalin agreed that information about the airports in Siberia should be made available; but when Harriman mentioned that American crews might ferry the planes, Stalin objected that it was "too dangerous a route".

Then the problem of a post-war settlement was broached. Stalin said that the Germans had to make good the damage they had inflicted. Beaverbrook evaded the issue noticing that first the war had to be won.

During the next meeting between the head of the Soviet state and the heads of the Anglo-American mission an acute situation arose. Stalin expressed his dissatisfaction that Britain and the United States were offering only a very insignificant quantity of the materials and equipment needed by the Soviet Union which was bearing the brunt of the war.

Beaverbrook and Harriman offered all manner of justifications and tried to show that London and Washington were doing all they could to aid the Soviet Union. The meeting ended with each side remaining convinced of the rightness of its own position.

After this meeting Beaverbrook and Harriman set out for the British embassy where a discussion was evidently held regarding the situation. Somehow there was a leak of information for on the next day the Nazi propaganda machine carried reports that in the course of discussions in Moscow between the Soviet Union on the one hand, and Britain and the United States on the other, serious contradictions had arisen. "The Western bourgeois countries," Radio Berlin assured its listeners, "will never be able to reach agreement with the Bolsheviks." When at six o'clock in the evening of the same day Beaverbrook and Harriman had another meeting with Stalin the latter men-

tioned the German report and then said with a smile that it was now up to the three of them to show that Goebbels was a liar. The list of materials that could be immediately sent to the Soviet Union was then reviewed and the British and American representatives undertook to increase them. Beaverbrook asked Stalin whether he was now satisfied with the list and Stalin replied that he was.

During this meeting Stalin also said that it would be desirable to have more motorised vehicles, particularly jeeps. And he added that in this war the country that could produce the most engines would ultimately be the victor.

Stalin listened to Beaverbrook's account of his talks with Hess with interest. He said that he did not think that Hess had flown to England at Hitler's request, though undoubtedly Hitler knew about the projected flight. Beaverbrook said that Hess had come to Britain thinking that he could encourage a small group of British aristocrats to form an anti-Churchill government which would make peace with Germany. Then Germany with British help could invade Russia. Stalin said that the German ambassador, Count Schulenburg, who had been in Moscow at the time of Hess' flight, had told him that Hess was unbalanced. Beaverbrook said that his impression of Hess, on the contrary, was that of a sane, well-balanced man.

Harriman, for his part, noted that relations between the United States and the Soviet Union would become closer and more effective in the near future and added that he hoped Stalin would unhesitatingly contact President Roosevelt directly on any matter that the Soviet Government considered important enough. Harriman then said that Roosevelt would welcome an exchange of telegrams with Stalin in the same business way as the US President exchanged telegrams with Churchill. Stalin replied that he would indeed take advantage of this should the need arise.

Beaverbrook said that it was very important for Stalin and Churchill to meet face to face.

Concluding the talks Stalin invited both Lord Beaverbrook and Mr. Harriman to dine with him the following day and the meeting ended in a very friendly atmosphere. During these talks important decisions had been taken promoting the further unity of the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition. True, London as

before refused to undertake active military operations against Hitlerite Germany, but the logic of the joint struggle ever more insistently demanded such action, and this led to serious disagreements among ruling circles in Britain.

Agreement on Deliveries

The Soviet People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs was given the task of drawing up officially the agreement that had been reached in principle between Stalin, Beaverbrook, and Harriman. For this purpose six commissions were set up covering the air force, the navy, transport, the army, industry, and food. The question of payment for the agreed deliveries was not fixed since at the time the Lend-Lease did not extend to the Soviet Union.

The final session of the Moscow Conference held on October 1, assessed the results that had been achieved. Molotov, the head of the Soviet delegation, said in his speech that in the few days of its duration the conference had "come to a unanimous decision on all problems facing it".

"During this period," he continued, "we have all had occasion to see how closely the vital interests and common aspirations of our great freedom-loving peoples have brought our countries together and led to close cooperation in the historical struggle against Hitler's rapacious Germany which lives through the bloody enslavement of other nations and the predatory seizure of foreign lands.

"The organisers of the conference set themselves the two-fold aim of aiding the Soviet Union and jointly striving to bring about the defeat of Hitler. Here it must be particularly stressed that not only Britain which is at war with Germany, but also the United States, which is not, equally recognised the need to destroy Hitlerism and to aid the Soviet Union to this end with their own rich material resources. In our eyes this alliance between such great powers as the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union largely determines the ultimate success of our struggle against the Nazis."

Referring to the political importance of the conference the Soviet side noted that henceforth a powerful front of freedom-loving peoples headed by the Soviet Union, the United States,

and Great Britain had been organised against Hitler, who had not yet had to face such a powerful alliance. It expressed confidence that the great anti-Hitler front would rapidly strengthen and that there was no force that could break it. Against Nazism an alliance of such states had been created which would find the ways and means to wipe it from the face of the Earth.

"It has fallen to the lot of the Soviet Union," said the Soviet delegate, "to bear the heaviest and the bloodiest blows of the fascist invaders. But we can see that the great importance of our struggle against Hitler is being increasingly recognised throughout the world. And a time will come when these peoples will express their gratitude for the liberation role which the Soviet Union is now carrying out in the interests not only of freeing the peoples of Europe from enslavement, but the peoples of the whole world as well. . ."

Averell Harriman spoke on behalf of the Anglo-American mission. He said that the conference delegates had been sent to Moscow to examine the needs of the Soviet Union in its war against the Axis powers and find ways to provide the materials which the United States and Great Britain would send. He noted that for the period of its duration the conference had worked continuously examining the present resources of the Soviet government in combination with the productive capacities of the United States and Great Britain and went on to say:

"The conference has decided to provide the Soviet government with practically everything that has been requested by its military and civilian bodies. The Soviet government in return will provide Great Britain and the United States with large quantities of raw materials which these countries need urgently. Transport has also been fully discussed and plans drawn up to increase the flow of freight in all directions. . .

"In the name of our governments Lord Beaverbrook and myself affirm receipt from the Soviet government of large deliveries of raw materials which will considerably help with the production of armaments in our own countries.

"We note the cordiality which predominated at the conference and which made it possible to conclude an agreement in record time."

At this meeting Molotov, Harriman and Beaverbrook signed a protocol for the deliveries and issued a joint communiqué on

the work of the conference. This stated that the conference of representatives of the three powers, the USSR, the United States and Great Britain had "successfully fulfilled its work, taken important decisions in respect of the tasks facing it and shown complete unanimity of the three great powers and their readiness for close cooperation that existed between them in their common efforts to defeat the enemy of the whole of freedom-loving mankind."

A Meeting with Stalin

At 8 o'clock in the evening of October 1, when the conference ended, the head of the Soviet government gave a dinner in the Kremlin in honour of the American and British delegates. V. N. Pavlov and myself were requested to act as interpreters. This was the first time that I had ever seen Stalin close up and that day has been etched on my memory ever since.

As part of the younger generation we had been taught to look upon Stalin as a wise and great leader, a man who saw and knew everything in advance. From his portraits, bronze busts and marble monuments we were accustomed to seeing him towering above everyone. And now I was to see him close up, interpret for him.

Everyone who had been directly connected with the conference of the Western Allies gathered at 7.30 p.m. in the Catherine Hall of the Kremlin. The antique decor of the hall have always amazed notable foreign guests. The luxurious 18th-century furniture, the chairs and divans with monogrammes of Catherine the Great, the green watered-silk wall paper, the old masters in heavy gold frames and the china and table-silver all of this unusual luxury evidently puzzled many westerners who had come to the land of the Bolsheviks for the first time.

At first there was a lot of noise in the hall as the guests in their various groups conversed loudly. But as it got nearer to eight o'clock people began to look more frequently at the tall carved and gilded door from where Stalin was to make his entrance. The atmosphere naturally became more restrained and

during the last few minutes before the hour there was almost total silence.

Finally the door opened and Stalin walked in. Looking at Stalin I experienced an inner jolt. He was quite different from what I had always imagined. He was shorter than average and his sallow, tired, pock-marked face looked almost emaciated. Instead of the shining marshal's uniform with its gold epaulettes and Hero's stars, he was wearing a military style tunic which seemed to hang off his wasted frame. I was suddenly struck by the fact that one of his arms was shorter than the other—almost the whole of one hand remained hidden in his sleeve.

That was the worst period of the war when the German hordes were pouring into our country, advancing eastward. They were drawing ever nearer to Moscow and Leningrad. Our troops, though fighting without thought for their own lives, were still being forced back further and further, but then at times they experienced an acute shortage of ammunition. Naturally the heavy burden of responsibility and failures had a profound impact on Stalin and was causing him great suffering. It was Stalin himself who had said that we would never yield an inch of our land to the enemy. And yet now the boots of the enemy soldiers were tramping over vast areas of Soviet territory. The Red Army had persistently been trained to deliver a crushing and immediate rebuff to any aggressor and to carry on military action on its own territory. And yet on the eve of the invasion it was Stalin himself who largely chained the initiative of the Soviet high command with the result that Hitler was able to drive a sudden wedge right into our country and then despite all the heroic resistance of our forces continue his advance. Before the war Stalin had repeatedly said that the treaty with the Nazis was not to be relied upon, and yet right up to the last moment he seemed to trust Ribbentrop's signature in the belief that for all the attempts of the German general staff to provoke an armed conflict, the politicians in Berlin were against it.

In Party documents and in the relevant memoirs, a principled evaluation of the situation that existed on the eve of the Great Patriotic War has been given. The Party saw the growing threat of a military invasion by Nazi Germany and tried to do

everything in its power to avert a war and gain time for the country to build up its defences. However, a number of factors that existed at the moment of the actual invasion gave the Germans a temporary advantage. These included mistakes that were made in foreseeing the possible date of the invasion and failure to prepare the armed forces for warding off the first blows. *The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* says that "Stalin was afraid of giving the Nazis a pretext for aggression, hoping to delay the confrontation by way of diplomatic negotiations".¹

General Shtemenko, a prominent military authority considers in his book *The Soviet General Staff at War* (Volume 2) that the fact that the date of Hitler's invasion of the USSR was not determined precisely is "a sad example of the great mistakes made by the High Command and by Stalin personally". Elsewhere he writes: "The fact that an invasion would occur was known and carefully prepared for with all possible steps being taken to improve the country's defence capabilities. Much has been written and said about this, in particular in my first book *The Soviet General Staff at War*. But that the invasion would actually come in June was, however, not expected. It was thought that it would take place much later. Those responsible tried in various ways to put off the invasion for as long as possible, but they were unsuccessful and the invasion took place."²

To this evaluation I would like to add some thoughts that arise from the diplomatic aspects of the matter, though, of course, they cannot claim to give anything like an exhaustive answer to this problem which requires further study and analysis. As I see it there are two points to consider. First, the fact that Stalin most definitely did not want a war evidently had a considerable influence upon his way of looking at the political situation as it then existed. Second, the fact that Stalin believed Hitler to be a treacherous adventurist and warned against any underestimation of him, yet realised that he was also a clever

¹ *Istoriya Kommunisticheskoy partii Sovetskogo Soyuza*, Politizdat, Moscow, 1980, p. 466.

² S. M. Shtemenko, *Generalny shtab v gody voiny*, Moscow, Military Publishers, 1974, p. 494.

bourgeois politician who knew how to undertake complex diplomatic manoeuvres and achieve his objectives with the greatest advantage to himself. Of course, Hitler's success in the pre-war years was due in large measure to the fact that Britain and France were trying to appease him and ready to forgive the fascists everything in the hope of implementing their proclaimed plans for a war against the Soviet Union. But at the same time it could not fail to be noticed that the Führer was extremely skilful in exploiting the situation.

In 1939 Stalin fully realised the danger of military conflict with Hitler's Germany, should our country become a prime object of fascist aggression.

After Hitler's Blitzkrieg victories in Europe and Africa Stalin evidently tried even harder to avoid a military confrontation or at least postpone it. This was the time when he frequently stressed the need to prepare for a war with Germany but at the same time took great pains to do nothing that Berlin could interpret as provocation or use as a reason for invading the Soviet Union.

By the spring of 1941 it became clear that Germany was not going to invade the British Isles. This, of course, was a warning. But, on the other hand, it is quite possible that Stalin assessed the situation differently. He may well have thought that before getting involved in a war in the east, Hitler would have to make sure of his rear in the west. As events were indeed to show, the fact that Hitler had made no prior political deal with the British led ruling circles in London to consider an alliance with the Soviet Union against the Third Reich to be more to their advantage and this meant that Germany had to fight a war on two fronts simultaneously. Yet, on the assumption that Hitler was a man who could plan his diplomatic moves with considerable skill, Stalin may well have believed that he would try to conclude a deal first with the British against the Soviet Union. This, of course, demanded a certain amount of time. The flight of Rudolf Hess, Hitler's deputy, to Britain suggested that the leadership in Berlin was thinking in this way. But although Hess's mission misfired, other attempts to bring about the same thing may have been expected and with feelers being put out and talks being conducted the whole thing could have dragged on for months, especially considering

the internal political situation in Britain and the strong anti-Nazi mood of the British public. This would have to be neutralised before reactionary forces in Britain could attempt to make any deal with Hitler.

All this, then, could lead to the conclusion that Hitler was not about to invade the Soviet Union but would postpone the war till the spring or summer of the following year. There was also the question of why Hitler had offered to meet Stalin, which proposal he had made during the talks with Molotov in the Reichskanzlei in 1940. Then there was the fact that the earlier mentioned dates for the German invasion (April and May 1941) had passed without anything untoward happening. Furthermore, spring had passed and it was well into summer, which meant that the Germans had lost several valuable months of good weather. It hardly seemed likely that they would begin an offensive with autumn coming up so soon. Thus this kind of logical thinking coupled with his passionate desire to avoid war must have confirmed Stalin in the belief that in June 1941, when Britain was still standing firmly on her feet and supported by American aid, there would be no German invasion. And indeed, this he subsequently admitted to Harry Hopkins. Stalin allowed that the Wehrmacht generals wanted war and that they would try to provoke a conflict with the Soviet Union, but he evidently believed that Hitler, as a skilful politician, would not run the risk of such a suicidal act as to involve himself in a war on two fronts. As it happened, of course, he was wrong.

In his memoirs Marshal Zhukov says the miscalculation that was made in determining the date of the German invasion of the Soviet Union was extremely serious. "Though it gradually came to have less of an impact," he writes, "it still functioned as an extremely grave factor in increasing the objective advantages of the enemy by giving him additional temporary advantages and bringing about the very serious condition in which we found ourselves at the beginning of the war." Marshal Zhukov also admits that "in the period when the threat of war was ever growing we in the High Command probably did not do all we could to convince Stalin that war was inevitable with Germany and could break out at any moment and to show him the urgent need for implementing our operational and

mobilisation plans." At the same time Zhukov points out that both the head of military intelligence, General Golikov, and the People's Commissar of the Navy, Admiral Kuznetsov, had submitted reports that were largely based on important information from the military attaché at the Soviet embassy in Berlin, General Tupikov, and the naval attaché, Captain Vorontsov, about the dates for Hitler's invasion of the USSR. But the conclusions that were drawn from these reports belittled their significance, for they were ascribed to German intelligence, which had supposedly fabricated them to spread misinformation and disorientate the Soviet Union.

Even at the very last moment on the night of June 21, 1941 Stalin would not believe that war was inevitable and continued to think that the military provocations were the work of the generals and not directly ordered by Hitler. When in the night of June 21 Stalin received a report that according to a German deserter the attack would begin at dawn, he dismissed it:

"Maybe the German generals have planted this deserter on us to provoke a conflict."

Even after the invasion had begun Stalin demanded to see the German ambassador before signing the order for military counteraction. He still hoped that the hostilities on the border and the bombing of Soviet towns were just provocation on the part of the German military and that a talk with the ambassador who had direct contact with the German government would clarify the situation. But Schulenburg's answer was not that which Stalin had expected. Returning after their talks with the German ambassador, Molotov could only find one thing to say:

"The German government have declared war on us..."

Marshal Zhukov who in his memoirs described this scene added that "Stalin sat down, immersed in deep thought. There was a long and agonising pause."

Subsequently Stalin only once publicly, and then in a somewhat indirect way, admitted what a great blow had been struck against his plans, what a terrible shock he had suffered on hearing the news of Hitler's invasion and what great fears preyed upon his mind during the first period of the Great Patriotic War. He made this admission only later when the Soviet people were celebrating their victory over Hitler's Germany. Speaking

at a Kremlin reception on May 24, 1945 in honour of the commanders of the Soviet Army and raising his toast to the health of the Russian people, Stalin said: "Our government made mistakes and we went through desperate moments in 1941 and 1942 when our army was retreating and leaving its native villages and towns in the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Moldavia, around Leningrad, the Baltic Republics and the Karelo-Finnish Republic, leaving because they had no other alternative..."

For all their restraint these words that were spoken and reported in *Pravda* four years after the German invasion of the Soviet Union reveal something of the enormous shock that Stalin must have suffered during the first days of the German invasion.

Important Decisions

Before inviting everyone to the table Stalin walked slowly along the long line of guests shaking hands with each one individually. Reaching the end he turned and made his way back, silently treading a soft carpet in soft Caucasian boots. He stopped not far from me and spoke to one of the military personnel from the foreign relations department. The few words he spoke were said quietly and slowly and with a strong Georgian accent. I looked at him out of the corner of my eye trying to control the feelings I felt inside—there standing right by me was Stalin, and yet he looked so ordinary, almost unnoticeable...

The guests began to sit down at the tables. They included the American delegation headed by Averell Harriman, the British delegation headed by Lord Beaverbrook, the US Ambassador, Laurence Steinhardt and members of his diplomatic staff, the British Ambassador, Sir Stafford Cripps and his staff. The whole Soviet delegation was there: Molotov, Voroshilov, Mikoyan, Malyshev, Kuznetsov, Shakhurin, Yakovlev, Litvinov, Golikov, and another twenty or so officials from the foreign ministry, the ministry of foreign trade and the ministries of defence and the navy.

The first toast was raised by Stalin to successful cooperation between the Allies and their victory over the common enemy.

Beaverbrook and Harriman made short general speeches in

reply. After the dinner Stalin, Molotov, Beaverbrook and Harriman together with their interpreters retired to an adjoining room for coffee. Although it was the most difficult period in the whole of the Great Patriotic War Stalin expressed his firm conviction that the war would finish on German territory where the armies of the three great powers would meet up. Harriman immediately replied that he also shared this conviction. Beaverbrook nodded his head in the affirmative.

During the remainder of the discussion Stalin stated categorically that the Soviet Union was ready to continue the war for as long as it was necessary to defeat the enemy. This evidently impressed Harriman and Beaverbrook considerably for later Harriman recalled that both he and Beaverbrook had been advised by the British and American military attachés not to remain in Moscow a day longer than necessary since any moment the city was about to be surrendered to the Germans. But their talks with the Soviet leaders and the determination of the Soviet people to defend their capital calmed the leaders of the British and American delegations. They realised that the fears of the Western military experts were unfounded.

The Beaverbrook-Harriman mission left Moscow on October 2, 1941. The next day Stalin wrote to Churchill:

"The arrival of the British and American Missions in Moscow and particularly the fact that they were led by Lord Beaverbrook and Mr. Harriman, had a most favourable effect. . .

"I admit that our present requirements in military supplies, arising from a number of unfavourable circumstances on our front and the resulting evacuation of a further group of enterprises, to say nothing of the fact that a number of issues have been put off until final consideration and settlement in London and Washington, transcend the decisions agreed at the conference. Nevertheless, the Moscow Conference did a great deal of important work. I hope the British and American Governments will do all they can to increase the monthly quotas and also to seize the slightest opportunity to accelerate the planned delivering right now, since the Hitlerites will use the pre-winter months to exert the utmost pressure on the USSR."

Stalin wrote to Roosevelt:

"I avail myself of this opportunity to express to you the Soviet Government's deep gratitude for having entrusted the lead-

ership of the US delegation to such an authoritative person as Mr. Harriman, whose participation in the Moscow Three-Power Conference was so fruitful.

"I have no doubt that you will do all that is necessary to ensure implementation of the Moscow Conference decisions as speedily and fully as possible, all the more because the Hitlerites will certainly try to use the pre-winter months for exerting maximum pressure upon the USSR at the front.

"Like you, I am confident of final victory over Hitler for the countries now joining their efforts to accelerate the elimination of bloody Hitlerism, a goal for which the Soviet Union is now making such big and heavy sacrifices.

Yours very sincerely,

J. Stalin."

In a speech on November 6, 1941 to the Moscow Council of Working People's Deputies Stalin referred to the importance of the talks with the Anglo-American mission.

"It is now a fact," he said, "that Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union are allied in one camp, a camp that has set itself the aim of destroying the Nazi imperialists and their invading armies. A modern war is a motorised war and the side that wins it is the side with overwhelming predominance in the production of engines. If we join together the engine production of the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union, then we have at least a three-fold superiority in engine production over Germany. This is one of the main reasons for the inevitable collapse of Hitler's rapacious imperialism.

"The recent three-power conference in Moscow which was attended by Great Britain in the person of Lord Beaverbrook and the United States in the person of Averell Harriman has resolved to give systematic help to our country in the form of tanks and planes. As you all know, we have already begun to receive some of these tanks and planes and even earlier Britain began deliveries of such important raw materials as aluminum, lead, zinc, nickel and rubber. If we add to this the fact that the United States has just agreed to provide the Soviet Union with a loan of one billion dollars—then we can say with confidence that the alliance between the United States of America, Great Britain and the USSR is real and growing, and it will

continue to grow to the good of our common liberation cause. . .”

The visit to Moscow of Lord Beaverbrook and Averell Harri-
man and their first-hand acquaintance with the situation in the
Soviet Union did much to further cooperation between the three
powers in their struggle against the common enemy.

The People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs Moves to Kuibyshev

On the morning of October 16 I arrived at work as usual at
9 a.m. At first everything seemed quiet.

Already during the first week of October the main archives
of People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs had been moved
to Kuibyshev, where in the event of the situation worsening
around Moscow it was planned to move the Commissariat itself
together with all the foreign embassies and missions accredited
in the Soviet Union. But during the last few days the position
at the front seemed to have stabilised and there was hope that
the evacuation of government offices would not take place after
all. But this hope was dashed at 11 a.m. on October 16, when
the telephone rang in the department in which I worked and
everyone was instructed to take their papers and essential per-
sonal belongings and go to Kazan Railway Station. Although
we had been expecting this, the sudden order to leave Moscow
when it came was like a bolt from the blue. Alarm was written
over everyone's face. While we gathered up our papers, some-
one brought the unpleasant news that despite the stubborn re-
sistance of those units defending Moscow the enemy had
succeeded in breaking through and were at the approaches to the
capital and that because of this it had been decided to e-
vacuate us immediately.

At the entrance to the Commissariat building on Kuznetsky
Most a row of canvass-covered lorries had drawn up. It was
snowing as the staff began loading up the lorries with papers.
Here too were the members of those families that had not been
evacuated earlier. They had only been allowed to take with
them one small suitcase of personal belongings. We got into
the lorries quickly and orderly and then the line of lorries mov-
ing out onto the Sadovoye Ring set off for the station in

Komsomol Square. There were few people about, for many of the enterprises had been evacuated from Moscow in early autumn.

In the high-ceilinged waiting hall of Kazan Station a large number of people had gathered. There was a group from the Comintern headed by D. Z. Manuilsky. They were also leaving Moscow but the announcement to board the train had not yet been made. People were walking about the hall, gathering in groups and discussing the latest news. I went up to the group that was standing around Manuilsky where a lively discussion was in progress. One young man asked Manuilsky what this sudden departure from Moscow meant. Did it mean that the capital was threatened and could be surrendered to the enemy? Manuilsky denied this positively.

"Of course," he said, "the situation is serious. But that is not the only thing. The decision to leave does not mean that we intend to surrender Moscow. Furthermore there is nothing sudden about it. Everything was prepared for beforehand and it is simply that it has now been decided that better conditions must be found in which government departments, international organisations and foreign missions in the Soviet Union can carry out their normal work."

"But there are rumours that the Germans are very near," said the young man again.

"I am quite sure," replied Manuilsky, "that the defenders of the capital will do their duty and the Germans will not pass. But it is a fact that the front is very near and for this reason only the most essential organs of government are to remain in the city. At the same time it is important that all institutions and organisations function normally, especially at the present difficult time. It is the duty of each of us not to be excessively alarmed and to move quickly and in an organised fashion to our new place of work where we can carry on our duties. . ."

An announcement came that the train for the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs staff had arrived. We went on to the platform where it was beginning to freeze, for the snow was no longer melting and the puddles were covered with ice. It was cold and damp in the train, although the lady guard said that as soon as the train got going the central heating system

would come on. Also by the guard's compartment there was an iron stove with blazing hotplates. This stove was to be very useful to us on the journey. We could boil potatoes and make tea on it. There was of course no restaurant carriage and at the stations the buffets were closed. All we had to eat was the food we used to bring to work with us every day, though we were able to vary this a little with pickled cucumbers and saurkraut that we bought from the women at the stations on the journey where at times we had long waits, while troop trains heading for the front passed us going west. All in all it took us three days to travel the comparatively short (by Soviet standards) journey to the Volga.

At Kuibyshev the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs was housed in the building which before the war had been a technical college. We were quartered in a building nearby which previously had been an office. Repairs were going on in both buildings but we still moved in. At first it was very difficult without telephones, but these were soon installed. The foreign embassies in most cases were housed in what had been before the revolution the houses of wealthy merchants.

The first days there were largely spent in putting our files into order and sorting out all sorts of immediate, mostly technical problems.

To mark the 24th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution on November 6 a meeting was held at the Kuibyshev Opera House. This was also attended by the diplomatic corps. A speech was made by the First Deputy Commissar of Foreign Affairs, A. Ya. Vyshinsky. He began on a note which, as later events were to show, put him in a somewhat embarrassing position.

"Although the leaders of the Party and the Soviet government are still in Moscow," he said, "for the first time in the history of the Soviet state there will be no revolutionary celebrations or traditional parade in Red Square. . ."

The next day, however, we learned that there had been celebrations in Moscow at which Stalin had made a speech and a military parade in Red Square in front of the Lenin Mausoleum by troops who were going directly to the front to defend their homeland.

Two days later B. F. Podtserob, V. N. Pavlov and myself re-

ceived instructions to return to Moscow as part of an operational working group headed by Molotov who had remained in the capital.

Early in the morning of November 9 we flew from Kuibyshev in a twin-engined transport and at midday landed at an airport near Noginsk, for because of the threat of German air attack both the Central and Vnukovo Airports had been closed.

It took us some time to get from Noginsk to Moscow by car along the snow-covered, icy highway. I was in Moscow to witness both the worrisome days at the end of November and the rejoicing of the people of Moscow over the brilliant victory won by Soviet troops at the gates of the capital, which was part of a counter-offensive launched in the beginning of December, 1941.

Our working group at the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs had no knowledge of the preparations being made for this counter-offensive. For us, the news that Hitler's forces had been defeated outside Moscow came as a pleasant surprise. I remember arriving in the Kremlin one morning after a few hours of sleep in the cold cellar of the Commissariat's building on Kuznetsky Most Street. I opened my copy of *Pravda*, still smelling of newsprint, and saw the thrilling headline. Next to it were photographs: twisted wrecks of enemy guns and vehicles blanketed in snow, and Nazi soldiers, hands held high in surrender. All of us had wanted for a long time to hear this news, had waited for it, had firmly believed the enemy would be stopped at the walls of the city and thrown back. Now, at last, this had happened! It is difficult to convey the joy we all felt.

The USA Enters the War

Pearl Harbour

At first light on December 7, 1941, Japanese airplanes brought across the Pacific unnoticed on aircraft carriers made a surprise attack on the US naval base at Pearl Harbour, Hawaii, where there was a large concentration of naval vessels. As a result of the bombing several American ships exploded and sank, and many planes were put out of commission.

The question of how unexpected the Japanese attack was for the leadership in Washington is still debated in the United States. Many argue that the White House knew about the Japanese plans several days—or at least several hours—in advance. It has been learned, in particular, that American intelligence had cracked the Japanese diplomatic code and read the secret telegrams sent from Tokyo to the Japanese ambassador in Washington.

Robert Sherwood, who held a responsible position in the White House at this time, recorded an incident that sheds light on the situation just before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour.

Roosevelt was in the Oval Office of the White House with Harry Hopkins, discussing the latest developments, when Commander L. R. Schulz entered the room. Schulz was an assistant to Captain Beardall, Roosevelt's Naval Aide. He brought in an envelope with the decoded text of a telegram the Japanese government had sent to its ambassador in Washington. The President read it and gave it to Hopkins, who studied it and handed it back.

"This means war," the President said to Hopkins.

Hopkins said that everything seemed to indicate the Japanese would make a surprise attack. The President agreed, and said America could not strike a preventive blow.

"We are a democracy and a peaceful people," Roosevelt added. "But we have a good record."¹

Thus it was decided in the Oval Office that nothing should be done in forestalling the Japanese attack; the Americans would wait for events to develop.

Robert Sherwood, commenting on this scene, explains that Roosevelt knew a Japanese attack was inevitable, but was under pressure from the isolationists, who were firmly entrenched in Congress. Even Japan's attack on British and Dutch possessions in the Pacific could not change this situation; the United States could only enter the war if the country were held at gunpoint, faced with the choice of giving blow for blow or relinquishing forever its status as a great power.

¹ James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt: the Soldier of Freedom*, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, New York, 1970, p. 161.

The only thing the Japanese could do to help Roosevelt solve the dilemma facing him was to attack US territory—which they did at one swoop and in so provocative a manner that the American public, which had been divided and confused, immediately closed ranks and became united and determined.

It was later discovered that the General Staff also had information about the upcoming attack. But General Marshall, who at that time was Chief of Staff, did not telephone the American naval commander in Honolulu at once, even though there was a direct-line telephone on his desk. When a Congressional investigating committee asked General Marshall to explain this, he said that one of the reasons he did not use his phone was fear that the Japanese might intercept and decode his conversation, or at least establish that the alarm had been given by the American command at the Hawaiian bases. The Japanese, Marshall argued, might have seized upon this to play the isolationist segment of the American public against the administration by claiming that Washington was preparing to take certain actions that could force Japan to move first. Once the Japanese had attacked, however, the administration could demand that Congress declare war on Japan.

The first reports of the catastrophe at Pearl Harbour to reach Moscow over the wires of foreign news agencies were very brief, but it was clear right away that one of the main events of the Second World War had taken place. The strike against Pearl Harbour meant the United States was certain to enter the war against Japan—if not, for the time being, against Germany. But even this was sufficient to significantly change the balance of forces in the world conflict. Now the reaction of Nazi Germany, Japan's ally, to what had happened was of particular importance.

Japan's attack on the USA was not at all what Hitler had been expecting. Throughout the summer and autumn of 1941, Berlin had been trying in every way it could to get the Japanese government to move against the Soviet Union. On July 10, at the very height of the German offensive on the Soviet front, Joachim von Ribbentrop telegraphed to the German ambassador in Tokyo: "Since Russia, as reported by the Japanese ambassador in Moscow, is in effect close to collapse . . . it is simply impossible that Japan does not solve the matter of Vladivostok

and the Siberian area as soon as her military preparations are completed. . . I ask you to employ all available means in further insisting upon Japan's entry into the war against Russia at the soonest possible date. . . The sooner this entry is effected, the better it is. The natural objective still remains that we and Japan join hands on the Trans-Siberian railroad before winter starts."¹

The groups ruling Japan, however, had no desire to pull chestnuts out of the fire for Hitler. The Japanese politicians had tried their own "Siberian campaign" during the intervention of 1918-1922, and remembered the lessons of Khalkhin-Gol and Lake Khasan; they were therefore wary of getting involved in a war against the USSR. They were looking more and more covetously, however, towards South-East Asia and the Pacific, where they saw the USA as their chief opponent and rival. Japanese expansion in this direction did not wholly suit Hitler, and he tried to pressure Tokyo into avoiding conflict with the United States for as long as possible. At the same time, Hitler feared that Tokyo and Washington might reach some agreement by which the USA could "secure the rear" for actions against Germany in Europe.

The militarists of Japan were making their own calculations. While laying plans for an attack on the USA, the Japanese government sounded out Berlin's reaction. On November 28, 1941, in the course of a conversation with Ribbentrop, General Oshima, Japan's ambassador to Germany, asked whether a conflict between his country and the United States would lead to a German declaration of war on the USA. Hitler's foreign minister avoided making a direct answer:

"Roosevelt is a fanatic," he said, "so it is impossible to foresee what he would do."

This did not satisfy Oshima, and he asked bluntly what Germany intended to do under such circumstances. Now Ribbentrop was forced to offer assurances of Berlin's good faith to its Axis ally.

"Should Japan become engaged in a war against the United States," he said, "Germany, of course, would join the war immediately. There is absolutely no possibility of Germany's en-

¹ W. Shirer, *Op. cit.*, p. 878.

tering into a separate peace with the United States, under such circumstances: The Führer is determined on that point."¹

Of course the guarantee Hitler's government thus gave to Japan was kept strictly secret at the time. At the same time, information from a variety of sources indicated that a struggle between different groups had long been going on in Tokyo, and that the direction in which Japan would strike out depended on its outcome. By all appearances, the Nazis were exerting diplomatic pressure on the Japanese government to move against the Soviet Union. There were more and more frequent indications, though, that Tokyo was inclining towards South-East Asia. Reports to the same effect also reached Moscow from Richard Sorge.*

Sorge's information proved correct. Once the Japanese had attacked a major US naval base, however, the question arose of what Nazi Germany would do. Would it remain faithful to its ally, or would Hitler prefer, now that his efforts to set Japan against the Soviet Union had come to naught, to remain aloof for the time being from the Japanese-American conflict?

The Führer's Speech

Several days had passed since the attack on Pearl Harbour, and still there was no news from Berlin about Germany's position. On December 11, foreign news agencies reported that Hitler would be making an important speech that evening before the Reichstag. It was to be broadcast by radio. There was reason to believe that Hitler would announce his decision to this session of the Reichstag.

That evening I was summoned by Molotov. He reminded me that in a few minutes Hitler's speech to the Reichstag would begin on Berlin radio, and said Comrade Stalin was interested in the speech and wanted to know its contents as soon as possible. I quickly tuned the receiver to Berlin. At first there was march music, and then a flurry of shouts from the "deputies"

¹ W. Shirer, *Op. cit.*, p. 888.

* A Soviet intelligence agent working as a German journalist in Japan. Sorge was arrested by the Japanese police in 1941 and executed in 1944.

of the Reichstag: evidently Hitler, as was his custom, had appeared last, when all the others were assembled, and was at that moment making his way across the pit to the stage of the Krol-oper to the accompaniment of shrill cries of "Sieg heil" from the "parliamentarians" he himself had appointed.

Before the war I had worked in the Soviet embassy in Berlin, and had sat in the diplomatic box during a number of ceremonial sessions in the Krol-oper—the opera theatre that had become the seat of the Nazi parliament after the burning of the Reichstag building. I remembered every detail of those farcical spectacles. The shouts merged into a solid roar, which continued for several minutes. Then it became quieter, and Goering, in a croaking voice, declared the Reichstag in session and gave the floor to the "Führer of the German people". Once again cries of "Heil Hitler" and "Sieg heil" rang out. Hitler coughed into the microphone a few times, silence descended, and the speech began.

So once again I was to translate Hitler's speech to Molotov, as I had a year earlier in the Reichskanzlei in Berlin. So much had happened since then. But there was no time for reminiscing: I had to give a simultaneous translation into Russian.

At first Hitler spoke calmly and evenly. Then, little by little, he began to wind himself up. At times his voice rose to a hysterical, shrieking treble, and it was difficult to pick out the sense of his broken phrases over the clamour that would rise in the hall.

About ten minutes after Hitler had begun his speech, the green telephone rang on the desk—this was the line used by Stalin alone. Molotov quickly went over and picked up the receiver. I could not hear the questions, of course, but even though my attention was concentrated on the radio receiver I caught Molotov's answers with some sort of second hearing:

"Yes, he has started already. . . So far just general phrases. . . It's not clear yet what they have decided. . ."

Stalin was waiting impatiently to learn what Berlin would do with regard to the Japanese-American conflict. There was so much that depended on that. Meanwhile the airwaves continued to bring the voice of the Nazi dictator from Berlin into the Kremlin office. Hitler fulminated against Roosevelt, who he said, was mainly responsible for the war. At last, having raged

to his heart's content, he came down to the main point. He declared that Japan's action had been met with deep satisfaction by the German nation and by decent people all over the world, and then shouted out that he was breaking off relations with the United States and declaring war on it. To this the "deputies" of the Reichstag responded with a fresh outburst of hysteria.

As soon as I had translated the last phrase, Molotov went to the green telephone and dialed a number. There was a brief pause while he waited for an answer. Then he said:

"They have declared war on the United States... What will Japan do?... He didn't say anything about that, but of course it is an important question... I don't think it's likely either. After the lesson we taught the Germans outside Moscow they will think long and hard in Tokyo before deciding to move against us..."

The question of whether the Japanese would yield to pressure from Berlin and join the war against the Soviet Union was of primary importance. This pressure was greatly intensified after Germany declared war on the USA, but later events showed that Tokyo preferred to act cautiously. It was becoming increasingly obvious that Hitler's Blitzkrieg against the Soviet Union was failing and the Japanese politicians did not risk to try their luck in Siberia.

Now that Hitler had decided to join Japan in its war against the United States, America would become a full-fledged member of the anti-Hitler coalition. Another step forward was thus made in bringing about military cooperation among the three great powers.

Anthony Eden in Moscow

Early in December of 1941, I was included in a small group preparing documentation for the upcoming visit of the British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, to the Soviet Union. The visit had been suggested by London, and the Soviet side responded favourably. The considerable expansion of Anglo-Soviet relations and the tasks of fighting together against the common enemy made it not only desirable but indeed indispensable to conduct high-level talks. What was more, a number of the political questions the Soviet Union had raised at the time the anti-

Hitler coalition was formed still remained unresolved, and Eden's meetings with Soviet leaders in Moscow might help clear them up.

The primary goal of the talks with the Foreign Secretary was to draft an agreement between Britain and the USSR concerning their alliance during the war and cooperation after it. There was also hope that during his visit Eden would discuss an earlier Soviet proposal that British units be sent to the Soviet-German front to fight against the Nazis alongside the Red Army.

In a message to Stalin of November 22, 1941, Prime Minister Churchill said the British government would "be willing in the near future to send Foreign Secretary Eden, whom you know, via the Mediterranean to meet you at Moscow or elsewhere. He would be accompanied by high military and other experts, and will be able to discuss every question relating to the war, including the sending of troops not only into the Caucasus but into the fighting line of your armies in the South. Neither our shipping resources nor our communications will allow large numbers to be employed, and even so you will have to choose between troops and supplies across Persia."¹

Thus Churchill, while not in principle rejecting the idea of using British troops on the Soviet-German front, had put forward certain reservations in advance.

The Prime Minister's message further expressed a willingness to discuss post-war settlement: "When the war is won, as I am sure it will be, we expect that Soviet Russia, Great Britain and the USA will meet at the council table of victory as the three principal partners and as the agencies by which Nazism will have been destroyed. Naturally the first object will be to prevent Germany, and particularly Prussia, from breaking out upon us for a third time. The fact that Russia is a Communist State and that Britain and the USA are not and do not intend to be is not any obstacle to our making a good plan for our mutual safety and rightful interests. The Foreign Secretary will be able to discuss the whole of this field with you."²

¹ *Correspondence Between the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the Presidents of the USA and the Prime Ministers of Great Britain During the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945*, Vol. I, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1957, pp. 34-35.

² *Ibid.*, p. 35.

Stalin replied that Moscow was ready to receive the Foreign Secretary: "I fully support your proposal for sending Mr. Eden, your Foreign Secretary, to the USSR in the near future. Discussion and approval of an agreement on joint operations by the Soviet and British troops on our front and the speedy execution of that task would be of great positive significance. It is quite true that the discussion and adoption of a plan for the post-war organisation of peace should be designed to keep Germany, above all Prussia, from again breaking the peace and plunging the nations into a new bloodbath."¹

Anthony Eden arrived in Moscow on December 15, and spent almost a week in the Soviet capital. He was accompanied by Alexander Cadogan Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office and also by civilian and military experts. During his visit Eden met several times with Stalin and Molotov, and exchanged opinions with them concerning joint efforts in the war against Nazi Germany.

As for the question of sending British troops to the Soviet-German front, this already had a history of its own. In its correspondence with Moscow, London had proposed that British troops be sent to the Caucasus to protect the oil fields, and also to the northern part of Iran. This, London said, would make it possible to use the Soviet forces in Iran and the garrisons in the Caucasus in the active army on the Soviet-German front. The proposal once again showed Churchill in a most unflattering light: it turned out that Britain could detail troops for guard duty in the Soviet Union and Iran, but troops were "not available" for combat operations on the Soviet-German front. The Soviet government had rejected this questionable proposal, and the talks with Eden yielded nothing new in this regard.

Another problem discussed during Eden's visit in Moscow was the western boundary of the Soviet Union, including the question of regarding the Baltic republics as an integral part of the Soviet Union. In 1940 the three Baltic republics had, at the express will of their peoples, entered into the Soviet Union; in time this was formalised through legislative acts both by the state bodies of the Baltic republics and by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

The British government declined to give official recognition

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. I, p. 36.

to the fact that Soviet power had been established in the Baltic states and they had become part of the USSR. The remnants of the overthrown bourgeois regimes of these countries, which had assembled in London, were taking advantage of this circumstance. Their steadily increasing activity was inevitably detrimental to relations between the two Allies, and naturally the Soviet side was interested in resolving this matter.

When the question came up during the negotiations in Moscow, Eden did his best to avoid facing it squarely. He claimed he was not able to say anything specific until the problem had been considered by his government, and repeated Churchill's declaration that the British government did not recognise any of the territorial changes taking place in the course of the war.

Eden said it was possible that this particular change might be acceptable, but he would have to consult with the British government first. At the same time, he cited the Atlantic Charter's provision that no territorial changes be recognised. Thus, London was claiming in effect the right to judge the validity of the legislative acts of Soviet power.

"Is it really necessary that the question of the Baltic states be dependent on the decision of the British government?" Stalin inquired ironically. "We are now engaged in a terrible war, and are losing hundreds of thousands of lives to defend the cause we uphold in common with Great Britain, our Ally. It seems to me this question should be regarded as axiomatic, not requiring any decision."

Eden, obviously trying to gain time, asked whether Stalin meant the future of the Baltic states after the war.

"Yes," said Stalin. "Will you support the desire of these three states to be part of the Soviet Union after the war? After all, we are demanding no more than that the former boundaries of our country be restored. I wish to stress that if you refuse, it will seem that you want to create some sort of possibility of partitioning the Soviet Union. I am surprised and even astonished that Mr. Churchill's government should take such an attitude—in essence, it is the same one as Chamberlain's government took. I must repeat that I am much surprised by the attitude of the British government towards the question of our boundaries."

Eden offered assurances that he would get the matter settled

before Soviet troops had entered the territories along the Baltic.

"I had thought," Stalin continued, as if he had not heard Eden's words, "that the Atlantic Charter was aimed against those nations which are trying to establish world domination. Things now look as if it is aimed against the Soviet Union."

Eden hastened to protest that this was not so. It was only that he could not give an immediate answer to some of the questions that had been raised regarding Soviet borders. He asked for time to get the answer from his government.

No agreement was reached on this point during Eden's stay in Moscow. The question was settled later, in the course of drawing up a Soviet-British Treaty of Alliance in the War Against Hitlerite Germany and Her Associates in Europe and of Collaboration and Mutual Assistance Thereafter. This treaty was signed on May 26, 1942. Together with other documents of that period, it helped in a significant degree to strengthen the anti-Hitler coalition. Some of its propositions and clauses were widely discussed at the time of Eden's visit.

The situation in South-East Asia and the Far East also came under discussion. In particular, Eden said Churchill wished to know the Soviet Union's position regarding Japan. The British were interested in the prospects for the Soviet Union's entering the war in the Far East.

"If the Soviet Union declares war on Japan now," Stalin said in reply to Eden's question, we will have to wage a real war—on land, on sea, and in the air. Therefore we must carefully weigh and consider the forces that would be thrown into the struggle. Much depends on how the war against Germany will go. If the Germans find themselves hard pressed, it is not impossible that they would push the Japanese into attacking us, and then we would have to fight. But we would prefer to have this be as late as possible."

There was a quite obvious hint here that the whole situation largely depended on the willingness of the Western powers to undertake active operations against Nazi Germany. Eden seemingly understood, and decided not to pursue further a theme he found unpleasant. At any rate, the question of relations between the Soviet Union and Japan was not raised again during the negotiations.

In the course of Eden's talks with Soviet leaders there was

also a far-ranging exchange of opinions on problems of post-war settlement, with special attention to measures that would make German aggression impossible in time to come.

All the Way to Berlin!

Eden had expressed a desire to visit the frontline, and was offered an opportunity to travel to the neighbourhood of Klin, through the areas from which the Nazis had been driven in early December by a mighty Soviet counter-offensive.

On returning to Moscow, Eden expressed delight at the brilliant victory won by Soviet troops, congratulated Soviet leaders, and offered wishes for further success. But much later, in his memoirs he confessed that in truth his feeling was not so much satisfaction at the victories of the Red Army as concern over what the inevitable defeat of Nazi Germany would mean for "British interests". In describing his trip to the frontline outside Moscow, Eden says he was amazed to see the heaps of fighting equipment left behind by the fleeing Nazis.

His memoirs contain a lengthy extract from his diary, describing in detail what he saw on the Soviet-German front in December of 1941. He makes only the barest mention, however, of the sufferings Soviet citizens went through under German occupation. Instead, he gives a highly circumstantial account of his encounter with three Nazi prisoners of war and of their conversation. It is plain from the Foreign Secretary's tone that he sympathised with these men and even felt sorry for them. Evidently he forgot that they had come with arms in their hands to enslave the Soviet people.

This way of assessing what was happening on the Soviet-German front in late 1941, this reaction to the powerful blows Soviet forces were dealing the hitherto "invincible" Wehrmacht, were highly characteristic of Eden. He saw in this a threat to the imperialist aspirations of Great Britain and the USA. He was afraid Soviet victory over Nazi Germany would change the world balance of forces. Eden wrote in his diary that if Hitler was defeated Russian troops would be far deeper in Europe at the end of the war than at its beginning in 1941. And for this reason he thought the Soviet government should be bound by appropriate agreements as soon as possible.

I remember an exchange that occurred during one of Eden's meetings with Stalin. They were talking about the further course of events on the Soviet-German front, and Eden said he thought the struggle would be long and hard,

"At present," he added, "Hitler is still just outside Moscow, and it's a long way to Berlin."

"That doesn't matter," Stalin replied calmly. "The Russians have been in Berlin twice already, and will be there a third time."

Surely Eden was not overly pleased by the confident tone of the Soviet leader. The two occasions Stalin had in mind were the entries of Russian forces into Berlin in 1760, during the Seven Years War, and in 1813, when the troops of tsar Alexander the First had taken the city as they pursued Napoleon's army in its retreat from Moscow.

Much later, Averell Harriman was to remember saying to Stalin during the Potsdam Conference:

"It must be very pleasant for you, after all your country has suffered, to be in Berlin now."

"Tsar Alexander," Stalin remarked placidly, "went all the way to Paris."

After Eden's visit a joint Anglo-Soviet communique was issued.

The talks in Moscow during Eden's visit marked a new and important step forward in consolidating the anti-Hitler coalition.

1942

The year 1941, which had been filled with epoch-making events, was coming to an end. Despite the grave trials to which they had been subjected, Soviet people could look back on the year with justifiable satisfaction. Hitler's plan for Blitzkrieg against the Soviet Union had fallen through—that was now obvious to all. The Führer's boasts that he would quarter his troops in Moscow for the winter had proven empty. Instead, the vaunted Wehrmacht had received a crushing blow outside the walls of the Soviet capital. Thousands of Nazi officers and men had met their death on the approaches to the city.

A hard struggle yet lay ahead, of course. The enemy was

still strong, and was making ready for a new thrust. But it was clear the factors that had favoured the Nazis at the start, especially the suddenness of their attack, were no longer at work. The long-term factors favouring the Soviet Union had now come into play: the unity of the Soviet people, economic and human potential, the superiority of the Soviet social system, and the correctness of Soviet strategic conceptions. The strengthening of the anti-Hitler coalition was also of great importance. Its further consolidation was promoted by the United Nations Declaration, which had been prepared by this time and which was formally signed on January 1, 1942, by the four powers—the USSR, Great Britain, the USA, and China—and by twenty-two other countries. The Declaration proclaimed that total victory over the Nazi aggressors was necessary to protect the life, freedom and independence of peoples. Each of its signers pledged itself to use all its resources, military and economic, against those members of the Berlin Pact with which it was at war, to cooperate with the other signers of the Declaration, and not to conclude a separate armistice or peace with the enemies.

The times were hard, but still there was a desire to celebrate the coming of the new year—1942. Everyone had a great deal of work. Naturally no one who remained behind the frontlines had any days off or holidays. Those working at the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs were on a particularly strict schedule. In essence the entire day, except time for sleep and for travel to and from home, was devoted to work. On the rare occasions when free time was available, anyone who planned to be away from home had to tell the duty clerk in advance where exactly he would be—even the row and the seat if he were in a theatre. And when you did get out to see a performance, it would often happen that a voice on the radio would announce that so-and-so was urgently needed at work.

But still a few of us were able to get together to greet the New Year. The working group that the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs left in Moscow after its evacuation to Kuibyshev was given working quarters in one of the vacated offices of the Kremlin building that housed the Council of People's Commissars. We had a direct telephone line to Kuibyshev, and were in regular contact with various departments of the People's Commissariat there. The building of the People's Commissariat

of Foreign Affairs on Kuznetsky Most Street was practically empty. It now held only a skeleton maintenance staff, an archive with the most essential information, and a cafeteria for employees. A dormitory, which was at the same time a bomb-shelter, was arranged in the basement. We spent our nights there, and there we sat out the air raids that were quite common in November and December of 1941. True, the German defeat outside Moscow early in December was such a shock to the Nazi command that the Luftwaffe's appearances over Moscow became far less frequent. By the end of the month we were able to move out of the basement.

I. S. Chernyshov, another member of our working group, was assigned with me to quarters in an empty office on the second floor, where we placed our folding cots, a table, and a few chairs. The building, like almost all of Moscow, was not heated. We were saved by a fire-place in the office. Wood was obtained somewhere and whichever of us got back from work first would hasten to get the fire going.

It was in this room that we celebrated the New Year; that evening we had a few hours free. Besides Chernyshov and me the company was made up of Kiselev, a friend of mine from before the war, when he had been vice-consul in Königsberg and our frequent guest in Berlin, and Koptelov, formerly third secretary at our embassy in Berlin. Koptelov worked in the consular department, and was in from Kuibyshev for a few days on business. Kiselev had turned up quite unexpectedly. After his return from Germany he had, like many others at the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, enlisted in the home guard. He had been wounded, hospitalised, and was about to be returned to the active army. But meanwhile the work of our Commissariat had once again begun to expand and, what was more, consular and diplomatic ties were established with countries that formerly had no such ties with the Soviet Union. Experienced staff was needed, and the personnel department sought out former employees and took them back into the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. Kiselev had been located while still in hospital. After serving for a time in Kuibyshev he was summoned to Moscow, where he waited for assignment to a new post as Consul General in New York.

We gathered shortly after eleven. The fire-place was already

ablaze, giving off a pleasant warmth—Chernyshov had gotten back a little before me and made the fire. We were in high spirits; it had just been announced over the radio that Soviet troops had liberated the city of Kalinin—a New Year's present to our homeland from the heroic Red Army. The outgoing year had been marked by yet another Soviet victory. All four of us present in the room had met the year 1941 in Berlin, as yet unaware of what our country would have to suffer: the bitterness of the initial losses and defeats, the forced abandonment of cities and villages, the evacuation of state institutions from Moscow, the bombing of the capital, the destruction. Now 1941 was coming to an end. The Soviet Union had held out, had withstood the first desperate onslaught of the enemy—that was the main thing. The Red Army had dealt the Nazis more than a few crushing blows—outside Tikhvin, for example, and outside Moscow—and now had liberated the city of Kalinin. And coming over the radio was the calm, slightly hoarse voice of Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin, the President of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, extending New Year's greetings to the Soviet people and congratulating them on the successes already achieved and the victories to come.

Together we remembered the comrades who were no more among the living. General Tupikov, a very nice man who had served as military attaché in Berlin, had been killed near Kiev. Kormilitsyn, our deputy trade representative in Germany, had perished in an air accident in Iran, where he was in charge of the transportation of Allied shipments. We also remembered many other comrades who had fallen among the war's first victims. Kiselev told us about the Moscow unit of the home guard he had served with, most of which had been wiped out while trying, with inadequate weapons, to hold back a powerful onslaught of German tanks.

We realised that many trials and sacrifices were still ahead, but like all the rest of the Soviet people we greeted the incoming year with optimism: it was clear that Hitler's Blitzkrieg had come to grief, and that whatever difficulties were still to come there could be no doubt of the Soviet Union's ultimate victory.

We parted a little after two. Chernyshov, who was to go on duty at nine that morning, stayed behind to rest a little. Kiselev and Koptelov went down to the maintenance department, where

a hotel had been improvised for visiting employees of the commissariat. I returned immediately to work. I walked to the Kremlin through the drifts of unremoved snow, following the dark tracks that had taken the place of sidewalks. There was a full moon, and from it and the snow the city, though unlighted, was bright. On Red Square only the strip of road along GUM was cleared. All around were hills of snow, with paths winding among them in different directions. I went along the one that slanted from the History Museum to the Spassky Gates. The chimes rang half past two. The first day of 1942 had begun.

The Main Partners

Some Aspects of Soviet-American Relations

Soviet-American relations had passed through a number of phases before the anti-Hitler coalition was established. There can be no doubt that the decisive factor in their development was the position the Roosevelt administration adopted after Nazi Germany's attack on the Soviet Union.

As soon as it became known in Washington that Hitler had attacked the USSR on June 22, 1941, Secretary of State Cordell Hull (as he writes in his memoirs) telephoned President Roosevelt and then his own assistant, Sumner Welles. To each of them he said:

"We must give Russia all aid to the hilt. We have repeatedly said we will give all the help we can to any nation resisting the Axis. There can be no doubt for a moment that Russia comes within that category."¹

This point of view gradually gained ground in the weeks that followed, though not without opposition. As noted above, many of Washington's military experts misjudged the strength of the Red Army. The more realistic politicians argued that there was no risk for the United States in sending arms and other needed matériel to the Soviet Union. President Roosevelt was

¹ Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs*, Vol. 2, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1948, p. 967.

of the same opinion; even before the Nazi invasion of the USSR, he had maintained that by taking such a step Hitler would ultimately bring catastrophe on himself.

The United States had received information early in 1941 from a number of sources indicating that Hitler was preparing to attack the Soviet Union. In January of that year, Hull had seen a confidential report by Sam E. Woods, the American commercial attaché in Berlin, who had a friend in Germany that hated the Nazis despite his ties with the government and with prominent leaders of the Nazi Party. Early in August of 1940, Woods's friend had informed him that Hitler was holding conferences concerning preparations for war against the Soviet Union.

Woods usually met his acquaintance in one of Berlin's cinemas. Woods would buy two tickets in advance, and send one of them to his acquaintance. While they were seated side by side in the darkened theatre, the latter would slip a note into Woods's pocket. The information Woods sent to Washington was contrary to the Nazis' public declarations that they were preparing for an invasion of Britain, but persons connected with Woods's friend said that the air-raids on England were only a camouflage for Hitler's true intention, which was to move against the Soviet Union. The man later told Woods that an economic staff had been chosen for the Soviet territories to be occupied, and that counterfeit roubles had been printed.

On the basis of information obtained from persons who worked in the Wehrmacht's general staff, Woods told Washington about the main directions of the offensive Hitler was preparing to make in the north, the south, and the center, where the immediate goal was Moscow. According to this information, preparations would be completed by the spring of 1941.

When this information first reached the State Department, Hull (as he himself later admitted) suspected a Nazi ruse. But cross-checking confirmed Woods's information, which was then passed on to Roosevelt. It is possible that this prompted him to take measures that later facilitated cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union.

In any case, Washington had taken a number of steps in this direction even before Nazi Germany's attack on the USSR. The embargo on trade with the USSR, enacted after the beginning

of the Soviet-Finnish war in December of 1939, was lifted on January 21, 1941. In essence this did not change anything: the goods earlier under embargo had been included in the system of licenses by a law passed on July 2, 1940, and their export was strictly controlled. The US measure adopted in January of 1941 was thus mostly psychological in effect, but it was to play a role in the future.

The American leadership was certain that if the Soviet Union was attacked it would defend itself and do everything possible to crush the aggressor. For this reason small amounts of certain American goods continued to be shipped to the Soviet Union. It is worthy of note that this displeased London. Lord Halifax, the new British ambassador, arrived in Washington at this time; at his very first meeting with Secretary of State Hull, he suggested that limits be placed on American shipments to the Soviet Union. On February 5, 1941, Halifax told Hull that Britain feared lest a considerable part of the supplies going to the USSR from the United States should eventually fall into German hands. He even presented Hull with a special memorandum pointing out the significant increase in Soviet purchases from the USA. Hull replied that his government was keeping a watchful eye on American shipments to the Soviet Union, and added:

"Russia whether very active or sound asleep, is and will continue to be a tremendous factor in the war and likewise in questions affecting peace generally, both in Europe and in Asia."¹

Reports about this conversation appeared in the British press. This caused displeasure in Washington: Hull invited Halifax to call on him, and told him that Britain's demand that American shipments to the USSR be curtailed should not have been published.

"I feel," Hull said, "that Britain is tipping the scales when she presents publicly such proposals as calling on this Government to impose an embargo against Russia."²

Hull's memoirs go on to say that on the whole US policy towards the USSR was firm but friendly. In fact, however,

¹ Cordell Hull, *Op. cit.*, p. 970.

² *Ibid.*, p. 971.

these relations were marked by considerable difficulties at the time. The delays that regularly took place in the delivery of various important materials were especially troublesome; K. Umansky, the Soviet ambassador to the USA, had repeatedly made representations to the American government concerning this. For example, in the course of a conversation with Hull on May 14, 1941, Umansky presented a memorandum citing concrete instances of delays involving shipments to the Soviet Union and also manifestations in the United States of hostility towards the Soviet government, which naturally had a deleterious effect on relations between the two countries.

Hull tried to object that the government of the United States was not in the least hostile towards the Soviet Union or its government; the facts, however, showed otherwise. Indeed, Hull himself tacitly admitted this in setting forth the USA's position with regard to the USSR. It was likewise impossible for him to deny that in a number of instances deliveries had been delayed; he could only repeat what were essentially the same arguments Halifax had used.

Here, as we can see, Hull showed a certain inconsistency: on the one hand he rejected the British demarche presented by Ambassador Halifax, yet on the other he used the latter's arguments to justify the American authorities in deliberately causing delays in shipments to the Soviet Union.

In spite of these frictions and difficulties, however, Washington's leading politicians, headed by Roosevelt and Hull, regarded the Soviet Union as a decisive force capable of resisting aggression by Nazi Germany and militarist Japan, and so the US government already began to lay plans for supporting the USSR in a possible conflict with Germany. No doubt a certain role was played by the circumstance that Germany and Japan were seen in ruling quarters in the USA as the most dangerous imperialist rivals.

It should be remembered, though, that isolationism was still very strong in the United States at this time. What is more, pro-Nazi lobbyists in Washington were actively exerting every sort of pressure on American legislators in persuading them to oppose US involvement in a European conflict. Hitler's secret service was also at work in the USA, and not without success. Roosevelt had to overcome serious resistance to his policy of

supporting the forces opposed to fascism. It is certain that the formation of Roosevelt's position at this time was also influenced by his personal dislike of fascism. He invariably called the Nazis "Huns". Evidently he believed that a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in a form as extreme as Nazism goes too far towards discrediting the entire capitalist system, of which he was a firm supporter.

Step by step, Roosevelt was bringing the country into closer cooperation with the countries at war against the fascist powers. In January of 1941, in a meeting at the White House with his closest advisers, the President declared that one of the administration's paramount aims was to do everything possible to keep up deliveries to Great Britain and said that the US Navy must be ready to convoy vessels across the Atlantic to England. This course was opposed by the isolationists, and there were many in Congress who sharply criticised the administration.

The Soviet Union's entry into the war after the Nazis' treacherous attack further strengthened the position of those American political leaders who saw the defeat of Hitler—and at the same time of German imperialism, which had begun to threaten the interests of British and American capital—as a task of the highest importance. Among this group, Harry Hopkins and Averell Harriman were particularly active. This is why Hopkins, who was in London at the time, was chosen to go to Moscow in July of 1941 as Roosevelt's personal representative. The Anglo-American mission to Moscow in the autumn of that year, headed by Lord Beaverbrook and Averell Harriman, and the important decisions reached during their talks with Soviet leaders, have already been described above.

Before Harriman's departure Colonel Faymonville, a member of the American delegation, was appointed to remain behind in Moscow as head of a group that was to oversee deliveries of matériel from the USA. This caused displeasure in the Department of War in Washington, since Faymonville was known as a supporter of active assistance to the USSR. In the meantime, a military attaché to the US embassy in Moscow at this time, Major Eton, was sending to his superiors highly pessimistic telegrams totally at odds with the information being received from Colonel Faymonville. For example, Major Eton radioed to Washington on October 10, 1941, that the end of Soviet resist-



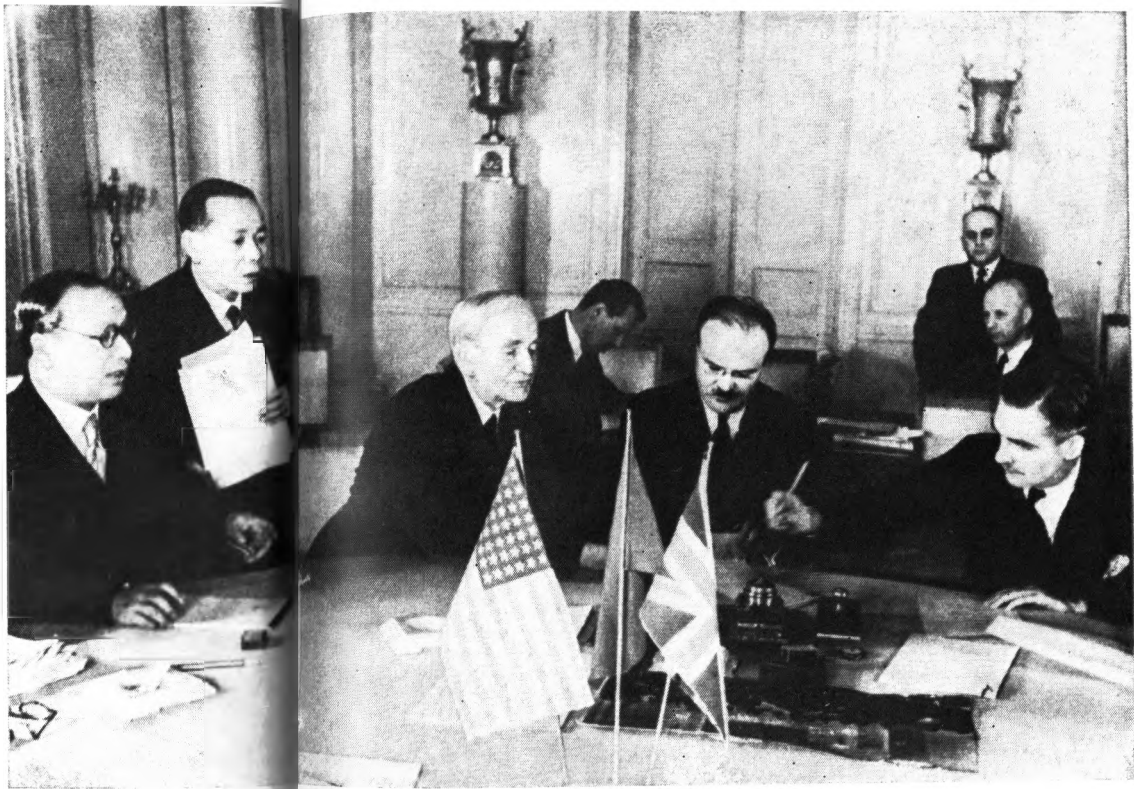
The Nazis crossing the border at the River Bug on June 22, 1941



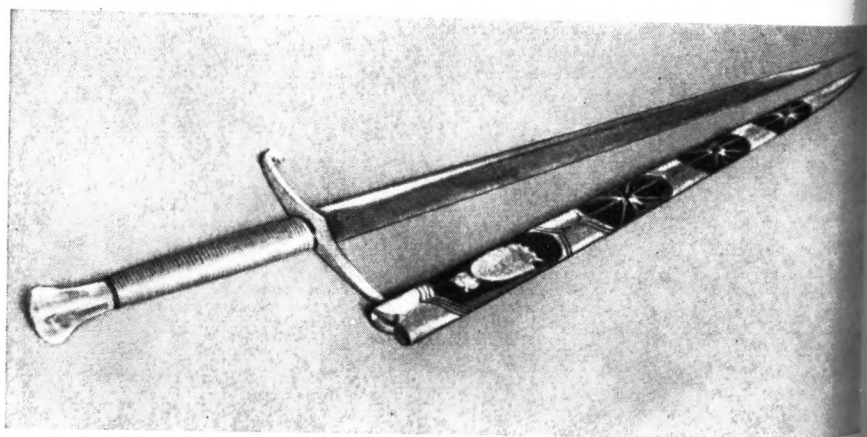
Winston Churchill and Averell Harriman upon their arrival in Moscow in August 1942



The negotiations with Churchill in Moscow in October 1944. Seated from left to right: Churchill, Stalin, Eden

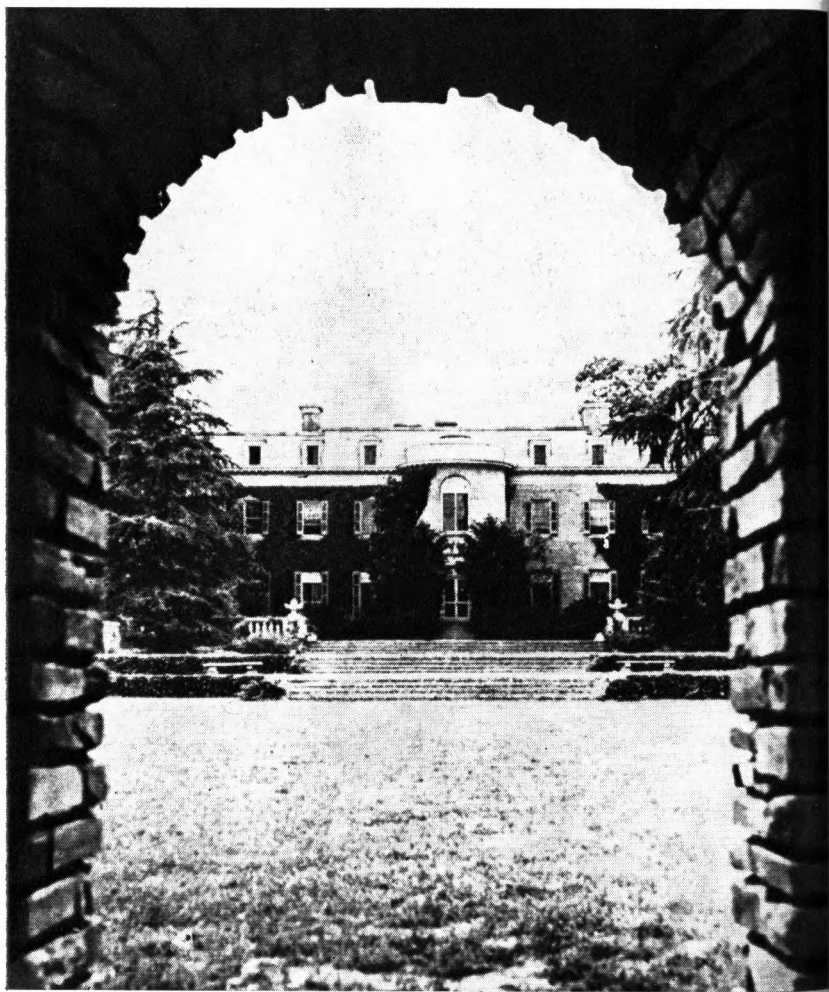


The Moscow Conference of the three foreign ministers. Seated at the table: Cordell Hull, Vyacheslav Molotov and Anthony Eden





At the ceremony of the presentation of the Sword of Honour to the defenders of Stalingrad. In the first row from left to right: Anthony Eden, the interpreter for the British delegation Birse, Voroshilov, Stalin



Dumbarton Oaks

ance was near and therefore there was no reason for haste in shipping matériel to the USSR, since it might end up being captured by the Germans. The next day a telegram arrived from Faymonville citing information received from the General Staff of the Red Army to the effect that Soviet forces had foiled the German attempt to surround Moscow and that the situation on the Southern Front, while grave, was not hopeless. From this, Faymonville drew a conclusion diametrically opposite to Major Eton's: he urged all possible speed in American shipments to the Soviet Union. Harry Hopkins noted in his diary that he distrusted Eton's report and considered more reliable the information supplied by Colonel Faymonville, which was later borne out.

Colonel Faymonville's appraisal of the situation on the Soviet-German front undoubtedly influenced the administration as it worked out its policy towards the Soviet Union during those first difficult months of the war. Steps were accordingly taken in Washington to speed up practical assistance to the USSR.

Many years later—in 1955—I met Faymonville by chance in San Francisco. By that time he had retired—in the rank of general—but he was still as energetic and lively as when we first met. We talked for a long time about the past, about his work in Moscow, and about the future of Soviet-American relations. Even in the mid-1950s, at the very height of the cold war, Faymonville remained a friend of the Soviet Union. I was saddened when I learned, some time later, that he had died.

Soon after Nazi Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, Roosevelt ordered the unfreezing of blocked Soviet funds. Early in August of 1941 acting Secretary of State Welles and Ambassador Umansky had an exchange of letters in which the American side promised to give as much economic aid as possible in order to strengthen the Soviet Union in its struggle against armed aggression.

On August 13, during a meeting held in the Atlantic, Roosevelt and Churchill sent the following message to Stalin: "We are at the moment cooperating to provide you with the very maximum of supplies that you most urgently need. Already many shiploads have left our shores and more will leave in the immediate future."¹

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. I, p. 17.

Events were to show, however, that this declaration had more to do with the Western Allies' intentions than with their actual deeds.

Anglo-American Shipments

After it had been agreed in principle by Soviet, British, and American representatives in Moscow in the autumn of 1941 that the Western powers would supply matériel to the USSR, Stalin and Roosevelt exchanged letters on this question. The President pointed out in his letter of October 30, 1941:

1. That he had seen the protocol of the Three-Power Conference in Moscow and discussed with the members of the American mission the data presented in it.

2. That he had approved all the items of military equipment and munitions and directed that the raw materials be provided "so far as possible as rapidly as possible".

3. That he had given orders for deliveries to begin at once and continue in the largest possible volume.

4. That in order to obviate any financial difficulties he had directed that arrangements be made at once for shipments up to the value of \$1,000,000,000 to be made under the Lend-Lease Act.

5. That he proposed, subject to the approval of the Soviet government, that no interest be charged by the United States on such indebtedness as might be incurred by the Soviet government arising out of these shipments, and that payments on such indebtedness, to be made over a period of ten years, begin only five years after the war had ended.

6. That he hoped the Soviet government would make special efforts to sell such commodities and raw materials to the United States as might be available and of which the United States might be in need. The proceeds of these sales would be credited to the account of the Soviet government.

7. That he wished to thank the Soviet government for the promptness with which the Three-Power Conference in Moscow was conducted by Stalin and his associates, and offer assurances that the implications of that conference would be carried out to the utmost.

8. That he hoped Stalin would not hesitate to communicate with him directly if the need arose.¹

As we see, the US government was at this time offering very extensive aid to the Soviet Union and also promising to deliver the materials agreed on in the shortest possible time. This approach was welcomed by the Soviet side. Stalin responded to Roosevelt's proposals in a letter dated November 4:

"I should like first of all to express complete agreement with your appraisal of the results of the Three-Power Conference in Moscow, which should be credited primarily to Mr. Harriman and to Mr. Beaverbrook who did their best to bring the Conference to an early and successful conclusion. The Soviet Government is most grateful for your statement that the implications of the Conference will be carried out to the utmost.

"Your decision, Mr. President, to grant the Soviet Union an interest-free loan to the value of \$1,000,000,000 to meet deliveries of munitions and raw materials to the Soviet Union is accepted by the Soviet Government with heartfelt gratitude as vital aid to the Soviet Union in its tremendous and onerous struggle against our common enemy—bloody Hitlerism.

"On instructions from the Government of the USSR, I express complete agreement with your terms for granting the loan, repayment of which shall begin five years after the end of the war and continue over 10 years after the expiration of the five-year period.

"The Soviet Government is ready to do everything to supply the United States of America with such commodities and raw materials as are available and as the United States may need.

"As regards your wish, Mr. President, that direct personal contact be established between you and me without delay if circumstances so require, I gladly join you in that wish and am ready, for my part, to do all in my power to bring it about."²

This exchange officially confirmed the agreement on deliveries reached during the Moscow talks in which Beaverbrook and Harriman participated. It thus represented another step forward in Soviet-American cooperation, paving the way for the formation of a military alliance among the three main partners: the USSR, the USA, and Great Britain.

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 14.

² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Immediately after the USA's entry into the war against Germany (December 11, 1941), Secretary of State Hull, made an important statement on behalf of the US government, in which it was pledged that effective aid would be given to the Soviet Union under the new circumstances.

There was also, at this time, no lack of British promises to aid the Soviet Union in every possible way.

But the realisation in practice of the obligations undertaken by the British and Americans was a long way from these solemn promises and declarations. Considerable difficulties, resulting mainly from consistent failures by the USA and Britain to meet their obligations, arose over the implementation of the agreements made.

According to the Moscow protocol, during October, November, and December of 1941 Britain was to deliver 800 airplanes to the Soviet Union; only 669 were delivered in fact. Instead of the 1,000 tanks and 600 small tanks promised, 487 and 330 respectively were delivered. The United States did still worse in fulfilling the protocol. Between October of 1941 and the end of June, 1942, 900 bombers, 900 fighter planes, 1,125 medium tanks and the same number of light tanks and 85,000 trucks, along with other equipment, were to have been delivered. In fact, during the period indicated, the Soviet Union received from the United States only 267 bombers (29.7 per cent), 278 fighter planes (30.6 per cent), 363 medium tanks (32.3 per cent), 420 light tanks (37.3 per cent), and 16,502 trucks (19.4 per cent). Naturally, all of this made it difficult for the Soviet command to plan its operations. Thus experience showed that the Allies' promises were in no case to be relied upon.

In the first months after the Soviet Union became involved in the war, neither Britain nor the USA undertook any combat operations against Hitler. Under the circumstances, it might have been expected that they would do a great deal more to supply the Soviet Union with various materials needed for its struggle against the common enemy than is shown by the figures cited above.

The myth that the British and Americans met their obligations quickly and completely still survives in the Western press. But the reality was far from the claims made by Western propaganda. The arms and other matériel that the Western Allies

solemnly promised were not delivered to the Soviet Union on time; when they were delivered, it was only in greatly reduced quantities. In quality, these armaments did not come up to the demands made by the front.

The arms often were of outdated models, or had serious defects of construction. Britain, for example, persisted in sending outdated Hurricane fighters to the USSR instead of its new Spitfires. In several cases the American armaments sent to the Soviet Union were no better.

The problem of the quality of armaments often came up in the correspondence among the leaders of the three powers. On July 18, 1942, for example, Stalin wrote to Roosevelt:

"I consider it my duty to warn you that, according to our experts at the front, US tanks catch fire very easily when hit from behind or from the side by anti-tank rifle bullets. The reason is that the high-grade gasoline used forms inside the tank a thick layer of highly inflammable fumes. German tanks also use gasoline, but of low grade which yields smaller quantities of fumes, hence, they are more fireproof. Our experts think that diesel makes the best tank motor."¹

President Roosevelt answered:

"I greatly appreciate your report on the difficulties experienced at the front with American tanks. It will be most helpful to our tank experts in eradicating the trouble with this model to have this information. The fire hazard in future models will be reduced, however, as they will operate on a lower octane fuel."²

Stalin also spoke of the low quality of matériel reaching the USSR from the USA and Britain in a conversation with Wendell Wilkie, then the Republican Party leader, who visited Moscow in September of 1942. In the presence of the US and the British ambassadors, Stalin raised the question of why the Western Allies were supplying the Soviet Union with inferior equipment. He explained that he meant especially the P-40's, which the Americans were sending instead of their far more advanced Aircobras, and the outmoded British Hurricanes; both models were considerably inferior to German aircraft. Once, Stalin added, the Americans had been about to send 150 Air-

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 30.

² *Ibid.*

cobras to the Soviet Union when the British intervened and took the planes for themselves.

"Soviet citizens," Stalin went on, "are well aware that both the Americans and the British have airplanes as good as the Germans' or even better, but that for reasons unknown some of these planes are not supplied to the Soviet Union."¹

Stalin's statement to Wendell Wilkie, the leader of the opposition to the administration then in the White House—and made, what is more, in the presence of official representatives of the USA and Britain—threw the latter into confusion. The American ambassador—at this time Admiral Standley—hastened to say that he had no information to this effect. But the British ambassador, Archibald Clark Kerr, admitted that he knew about the Aircobras. He attempted to justify their having been diverted somewhere else by saying that in British hands these 150 planes were "of far greater value to the Allied cause than would have been the case had they been delivered to Russia"².

The British ambassador's explanation was incorrect in essence and tactless, to say the least, in form; the main battles against the common enemy were being waged after all, on the Soviet-German front, not "somewhere else".

In his messages to the British and American leaders, Stalin repeatedly stressed the importance of shipping materials intended for the Soviet Union speedily and in full volume. On August 22, 1942, Stalin addressed Roosevelt in these words:

"I should like to emphasise our special interest in receiving US aircraft and other weapons, as well as trucks in the greatest numbers possible. It is my hope that every step will be taken to ensure early delivery of the cargoes to the Soviet Union, particularly over the northern sea route."³

The Western Allies usually explained delayed deliveries as resulting from a lack of ships; the Soviet government therefore consented to a temporary reduction in deliveries of certain types of arms provided that what was most needed could be supplied regularly. On October 7, 1942, Stalin wrote to Roosevelt:

¹ *Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1942*, Vol. 3, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1961, p. 643.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 36.

"We should be prepared temporarily fully to renounce deliveries of tanks, guns, ammunition, pistols, etc. At the same time, however, we are badly in need of increased deliveries of modern fighter aircraft—such as Aircobras—and certain other supplies. It should be borne in mind that the Kittyhawk is no match for the modern German fighter."¹

Roosevelt replied to this appeal by saying that "urgent combat requirements" made it impossible at that moment to increase the number of Aircobras to be sent to the Soviet Union. He confined himself to a very vague promise to study the question of increasing shipments of other types of arms needed by the Soviet Union.²

During one of the gravest times of the war for the Soviet Union—the summer and autumn of 1942, when Hitler's hordes were surging towards the Volga and the Caucasus—the American and British governments suspended their convoys along the northern route entirely. On July 16, General Burns of Great Britain, who was in charge of shipments to the USSR, told a Soviet representative that the governments of the USA and Britain had decided to stop sending vessels with cargoes for the USSR to northern ports. The freight that was to be shipped by this route was three-quarters of the total. During July and August of 1942, Britain sent not a single plane to the Soviet Union.

At the same time, the British government sharply reduced the amount of matériel it was sending to the USSR along the trans-Iranian railway. Congestion was cited as the reason, although repeated promises had been made to increase the carrying capacity of rail routes in central and southern Iran. By August 15, 1942, 34,977 tons of undischpatched matériel was tied up in the ports of the Persian Gulf.

The US and British governments had known as early as March of 1942 about the scale of the upcoming battles on the Soviet-German front. They recognised that the Eastern front was where the outcome of the war would be decided. Nevertheless, they did nothing to speed up deliveries of matériel to the USSR.

London and Washington explained their cutting of shipments

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

along the northern route to a minimum during the summer months by pointing to the significant increase in the losses of transport vessels suffered during the period of light inside the Polar Circle. There was an element of truth in this, of course, but much depended, too, on the Anglo-American command and its willingness to overcome the difficulties that arose during that time.

Take, for example, the story of the PQ-17 convoy, which was made up of 34 transports and two rescue vessels. The convoy left Iceland in early June, 1942. Although it was summertime, the protection was extremely ill organised. The British Admiralty, which exercised supreme command in that region, had concentrated large American and British naval forces at various points along the convoy's route for its protection. But when a real danger arose (it was learned that the German battleship *Tirpitz* was moving to intercept the transport ships) Admiral Dudley Pound, Britain's First Sea Lord, ordered all protective forces to withdraw to the west, leaving the transports completely defenceless. With a top speed of only 9 or 10 knots, they made easy prey for German submarines and aviation. In the end, 24 of the 34 transports were lost. The command of the Soviet Northern Fleet took energetic measures to seek out and rescue the remaining transports, sending its own ships and planes to the area of the disaster. The surviving vessels arrived safely in Arkhangelsk under the escort of Soviet warships.

Stalin wrote to Churchill on July 23, 1942, regarding this tragic incident:

"The British Admiralty's order to the PQ-17 convoy to abandon the supply ships and return to Britain, and to the supply ships to disperse and make for Soviet harbours singly, without escort, is, in the view of our experts, puzzling and inexplicable."¹

The Soviet government insisted that planned deliveries to the Soviet Union, including those along the northern route, continue to be made regularly. London and Washington, however, citing the case of convoy PQ-17, decided to stop sending transports to northern Soviet ports. Convoy movements along this route were resumed only in September.

In speaking of deliveries under Lend-Lease, it is important

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. I, p. 56.

to compare the volume of Soviet arms production with what was received from the USA and Britain during the war years. Let us see, for example, where the Red Army's tanks and planes—the most important types of weapons in those times—came from. According to official American figures, 14,450 planes and about 7,000 tanks reached the USSR from the USA in all the years of the war. From the beginning of the Soviet war effort up to the end of April, 1944, 3,384 planes and 4,292 tanks were furnished by Britain, and 1,188 tanks by Canada. By comparison, the average annual output of Soviet industry in the last three years of the war was more than 30,000 tanks and self-propelled guns; production of planes went as high as 40,000 annually. The manufactured goods supplied to the USSR by the Allies in all the years of the war came to 4 per cent of the Soviet industrial output.

Nonetheless, the Soviet side always acknowledged that the matériel received from the Allies was of value to the Red Army in its combat operations, especially in the first period of the war. This help was received with gratitude by the fighting men, the people, and the government of the Soviet Union.

The Problem of the Second Front

When he attacked the Soviet Union, Hitler assumed that in the foreseeable future nothing could threaten him from the west. France had been prostrated. A considerable part of its territory was under the heel of the Wehrmacht, and the remainder was controlled by the Vichy government headed by the collaborationist Marshal Pétain, the obedient servant of Berlin. Britain had been humiliated by the hasty departure from Dunkirk of its expeditionary force and subjected to fierce attacks by the Luftwaffe in the autumn of 1940 and the spring of 1941, which had wrought great destruction in London, Coventry, and other cities; the country was still in a state of shock. German submarines plied the waters of the Atlantic with impunity, seriously impeding the delivery of arms, ammunition, and other matériel to the British Isles from the United States.

A month before the hordes of the Nazis and their satellites invaded the Soviet Union, the Führer's first deputy, Rudolph Hess, left for England on a "secret" mission: to persuade the

groups ruling that country, through the intercession of his "peacemaking" British friends, to enter into collusion with Germany in the name of a "higher goal"—the struggle against communism. In the summer of 1941, Hitler was still hoping that "faithful Rudolph" would succeed and the British would at least stand by idly while he undertook the destruction of the socialist state he so hated. Once he became the ruler of Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals, the Führer would be able to do whatever he pleased. The fate of humanity, including the British, would be in his hands.

With such plans in mind, Hitler concentrated against the Soviet Union all the might of the Third Reich, the economic potential of occupied Western Europe, and of his satellites. An army of more than five million, well equipped with the most modern weapons, was brought together for the invasion. The absence of active combat operations in the west made it possible for the German command to send more and more divisions, tank corps, and air squadrons against the Soviet Union as operations unfolded on the Eastern front.

Thus it was the primary concern of the Soviet government, from the very first days of the anti-Hitler coalition, to persuade its Western Allies to open a second front in Western Europe. This was the only way to effectively overturn the plans of the German command, undermine the enemy's morale, and remove at least some of the burden from the Red Army, which was heroically withstanding the onslaught of the fascist hordes.

At the cost of enormous sacrifices, the fighting men of the Soviet Union, staking their very lives in defence of their homeland, destroyed the best units of Hitler's armies and thereby made the decisive contribution to the cause of victory over the common foe. It was the duty of the Western Allies to begin active military operations on a second front, in Western Europe, as soon as possible and thus foil Hitler's plans, to make the nightmare of a war on two fronts, which had always haunted German strategists, a reality of the war the Nazis had unleashed.

But Britain, and, after Pearl Harbour, the USA, as well, put off from month to month and from year to year the opening of a second front, breaking one after the other the promises they made to undertake an operation across the Channel in 1941, in 1942, and then in 1943. This was one of the main factors

complicating relations between the members of the anti-Hitler coalition. It was impossible not to see that London and Washington were intentionally delaying the opening of a second front. There were influential groups in Britain and the USA that spoke openly of letting the combatants wear themselves out on the Soviet-German front so that the Western Allies could enter the war as arbiters in its last phase and dictate their own will. These aims, naturally, had nothing to do with the Allied obligations or with the task of quickly defeating fascism, the enemy of mankind.

The problem of a second front was discussed constantly both in talks among representatives—at various levels—of the countries belonging to the anti-Hitler coalition and in the correspondence among the leaders of the three great powers—the Soviet Union, the United States, and Great Britain. This discussion was particularly heated in 1942 and 1943, when the Soviet Union's relations with Britain and the USA had been seriously complicated by their delays in opening a second front.

In the spring of 1942, Roosevelt informed Stalin that he wanted to exchange opinions with an authoritative Soviet representative on a number of questions concerning the conduct of the war against the common enemy. In a personal and secret message received in Moscow on April 12, the President wrote:

"It is unfortunate that geographical distance makes it practically impossible for you and me to meet at this time. Such a meeting of minds in personal conversation would be useful to the conduct of the war against Hitlerism. Perhaps if things go as well as we hope, you and I could spend a few days together next summer near our common border off Alaska. But, in the meantime, I regard it as of the utmost military importance that we have the nearest possible approach to an exchange of views."¹

Roosevelt went on to explain that what he had in mind was a high-level discussion of an important military proposal for using the USA's armed forces to ease the critical situation on the Soviet-German front. The President stressed that he attached great importance to this aim.

"Therefore," the message continued, "I wish you would consider sending Mr. Molotov and a General upon whom you

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. II, pp. 22-23.

rely to Washington in the immediate future. Time is of the essence if we are to help in an important way. We will furnish them with a good transport plane so that they should be able to make the round trip in two weeks.

"I do not want by such a trip to go over the head of my friend, Mr. Litvinov, in any way, as he will understand, but we can gain time by the visit I propose.

"I suggest the procedure not only because of the secrecy, which is so essential, but because I need your advice before we determine with finality the strategic course of our common military action. I have sent Hopkins to London relative to this proposal."¹

This message was of signal importance. Nearly a year had passed since Nazi Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, and in all that time the Western Allies, under one pretext or another, had refused to even discuss the opening of a second front. Now the President of the USA had suggested quite unambiguously that Washington, at any rate, was ready to undertake certain actions with its armed forces in order to ease the situation on the Soviet-German front, and that he wanted to consult with the Soviet side on this matter before making his final decision.

In trying to find out just what it was that Washington intended to do, the Soviet government decided to declare once again its own desire to see a second front opened in Europe as early as possible. Therefore, in its positive reply to the President's suggestion, the Soviet side thought it necessary to stress that it was expecting such an action.

On April 20, Stalin sent his reply to Roosevelt:

"The Soviet Government agrees that it is essential to arrange a meeting between V. M. Molotov and you for an exchange of views on the organisation of a second front in Europe in the near future. Molotov can arrive in Washington not later than May 10-15, accompanied by an appropriate military representative.

"It goes without saying that Molotov will also go to London to exchange views with the British Government.

"I have no doubt that I shall be able to have a personal meeting with you, to which I attach great importance, especial-

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 23.

ly in view of the problems of organising the defeat of Hitlerism that confront our two countries.

"Please accept my sincere regards and wishes for success in the struggle against the enemies of the United States of America".¹

Under the conditions of those times the planned trip, of course, demanded complete secrecy and appropriate precautions. In a subsequent letter to Roosevelt informing him that Molotov's trip had been postponed for several days on account of unfavourable weather, Stalin wrote that the Soviet government thought it necessary for Molotov "to travel without any press publicity until he returns to Moscow, as was done in the case of Mr. Eden's visit to Moscow last December".² The same message indicated that the trip to Britain and the USA could be made in a Soviet aircraft.

The interpreter accompanying Molotov on this trip was Vladimir Pavlov. The group travelled in a specially refitted long-range Soviet bomber; they went to London via Scotland, and then on to Washington via Iceland. To throw the omnipresent British and American reporters off the track, the delegation was referred to as "Mr. Brown's mission". As later became clear, certain information about the mission's real head leaked out, nonetheless, through the official American interpreter, and became quite widely known in Washington. No reports appeared in the press, however, until the delegation had returned home.

As has been said, the most important question discussed by the Soviet delegation in London and Washington was the opening of a second front.

In London the Soviet and British representatives also discussed other important matters, including the Anglo-Soviet treaty which was concluded at that time.

The British government at first declined to make any definite promises concerning a second front, but after a concrete agreement was reached during Molotov's visit to Washington, it was impossible for London to hang back any longer. The British government had to put its signature to a joint Anglo-Soviet communiqué repeating the Soviet-American wording agreed

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

² *Ibid.*, p. 25.

upon earlier: "Full understanding was reached with regard to the urgent task of creating a second front in Europe in 1942."¹

Even as it signed the communiqué, however, the British government had no intention of fulfilling its commitment. In a memorandum dated June 10, 1942, it opened a loophole by which to escape from doing its duty as an ally and opening a second front. The British government declared that if for some reason a second front could not be opened in 1942, France would certainly be invaded by an Anglo-American force of up to 1.5 million men in the next year, 1943.

Thereafter, events developed as follows. As soon as the talks in London and Washington were over, Churchill set about convincing the US government that the agreement just reached for opening a second front in Europe in 1942 (operation Sledgehammer) must be abandoned. He told Roosevelt categorically that there could be no question of landing in France in the near future. Instead, Churchill suggested considering the possibility of an operation to liberate North Africa, which was later given the code name Torch. At first American military men, including General Marshall, were opposed to Torch; they argued that it would require so much time, strength, and matériel as to rule out landing a large Allied force in France not only in 1942 but even in 1943. Roosevelt was of the same opinion. He continued to insist on an invasion of Northern France in the autumn of 1942. The Prime Minister, however, stubbornly promoted his own idea.

An American delegation headed by Harry Hopkins travelled to London to discuss with British leaders the question of whether Torch or Sledgehammer should be given preference. Churchill argued that the operation in France was impracticable and demanded that preparations be made for the seizure of North Africa. At first no common ground could be reached. Hopkins appealed to Roosevelt, but the President made no move to save the American plan and follow through on the commitments made to the Soviet Union.

Roosevelt did not even think it necessary to get in touch with Churchill at the decisive moment, although the two leaders kept

¹ Winston S. Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, Bantam Books, New York, 1962, p. 297.

up a regular personal correspondence. He simply took British opposition to Sledgehammer as an unalterable fact and telegraphed to Hopkins and Marshall in London instructions to find some other land operations against German forces in which American troops could be engaged without fail in 1942. He mentioned North Africa and the Middle East as possibilities. After receiving this reply, Hopkins and Marshall quickly reached an agreement with the British: the invasion of France was removed from the agenda.

Churchill had won out. Britain and the USA agreed that there would be no second front in Europe in 1942; instead they would launch operation Torch in North Africa. At the same time the two governments declared that preparations would continue for a large-scale landing in France sometime in 1943 (operation Roundup). The fact is, however, that even then Churchill was looking for ways to block the invasion of France in 1943 as well.

As has been said above, the role President Roosevelt played in all this was a highly ambivalent one. Many were inclined, both during the Second World War and after it, to go too far in idealising Roosevelt as a staunch anti-fascist and a champion of national self-determination. But this appealing portrait is not entirely true-to-life. It must not be forgotten that Roosevelt was first and foremost a son of his own class. During the world crisis of 1929-1933, a time of grave difficulty for American capitalism, he overrode the protests of more thick-headed members of the American big bourgeoisie and resorted to measures that sometimes seemed radical. Nonetheless, he always acted in the interests of American capitalism and remained to the end a representative of the US ruling élite. His New Deal had just one goal—to help shore up American capitalism.

The principles that guided Roosevelt throughout his career also manifested themselves in his foreign policy. Although he entered into a military alliance with the Soviet Union in the name of victory over the common enemy, Roosevelt's attitude towards the chief questions of this time was always shaped by the global interests of American imperialism. The President's son, Elliott, remembers how his father saw the United States' role in the Second World War:

"Just figure it's a football game. Say we're the reserves, sit-

ting on the bench. At the moment, the Russians are the first team, together with the Chinese, and, to a lesser extent, the British... Before the game is so far advanced that our blockers are tired, we've got to be able to get in there for the touch-down... I think our timing will be right."¹

This point of view repeatedly found expression in Roosevelt's position regarding a second front. When faced with the necessity of choosing whether to keep the promise made to the Soviet Union or to join Churchill—another bourgeois politician—in working out a tactic that the ruling groups in London thought more expedient at that time, Roosevelt sided with British imperialism.

Once he had gotten Roosevelt's agreement, Churchill announced that he himself would explain to Stalin why Britain and the USA were going back on their promise to open a second front in 1942. In his message of July 18 he informed the head of the Soviet government that the Western Allies would not invade France in 1942.

Churchill's message, understandably, evoked a sharply negative reaction from the Soviet side. In his reply to Churchill, dated July 23, Stalin pointed out that Britain and the USA had made this decision "despite the agreed Anglo-Soviet Communiqué on the adoption of urgent measures to open a second front in 1942".² The message continued: "In view of the situation on the Soviet-German front, I state most emphatically that the Soviet Government cannot tolerate the second front in Europe being postponed till 1943."³

Churchill understood that the situation which had arisen might seriously complicate relations with the Soviet Union, and travelled posthaste to Moscow.

Winston Churchill in Moscow

In the first years of Soviet power, when Winston Churchill, then a member of the British cabinet, championed an anti-Bolshevik crusade by fourteen bourgeois states, he could not, of

¹ Elliott Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn., 1946, pp. 54-55.

² *Correspondence*, Vol. I, p. 56.

³ *Ibid.*

course, have even dreamed that two decades later he would go to Moscow—the capital of the Soviet state allied to Great Britain—as an emissary of the groups ruling Britain and the USA. What was more, he was forced to play the unenviable role of a politician who had to seek for a plausible excuse after breaking a solemn pledge.

It may well be imagined that during his first flight to Moscow, in the summer of 1942, Churchill could not help but reflect on the lesson he was receiving from history. At any rate, the Prime Minister wore a most concerned air when, in the afternoon of August 12, he descended the ramp from a plane that had just landed at Moscow's Central Airport, on the Leningrad Highway. The official ceremony of welcome was conducted according to all the rules. National anthems were played, and a guard of honour reviewed. The prevailing atmosphere, however, was rather cold.

The welcoming Soviet officials behaved with restraint. As he reviewed the honour guard, Churchill, his head pulled down into his shoulders, looked intently at each soldier as if gauging the mettle of the Soviet fighting men who were withstanding a furious Nazi assault along a gigantic front running clear through the Soviet Union—from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea.

Averell Harriman, who was to be the personal representative of the President of the United States at the upcoming talks, and also a group of military men accompanied Churchill to Moscow.

Harriman was already well-known in the Soviet capital, and not only from his visit in the autumn of 1941, in company with Lord Beaverbrook, for important talks concerning arms deliveries. Harriman first came to the Soviet Union in 1926, when his family had been granted a concession to mine manganese ore in Chiatura, in the Caucasus. He had visited Moscow then to meet with Soviet leaders, and now Stalin jokingly referred to him as "our man from Chiatura".

A row of black limousines stood waiting on the green airfield not far from the plane. As soon as the official ceremonies had been concluded, the guests were seated in them, together with welcoming officials, in the following order: in the first car, Churchill and Molotov; in the second, Harriman and A. Sobo-

lev, General Secretary of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs; then Alexander Cadogan and F. Molochkov, Chief of Protocol for the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs; General Brooke and Marshal of the Soviet Union Shaposhnikov; General Wavell and General Sinilov; General Maxwell and M. Potrubach, from the Secretariat of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs; General Spalding and Colonel Yevstigneyev, head of the Foreign Relations Department of the People's Commissariat of Defence. I was asked to accompany Air Marshal Tedder.

Churchill was taken directly from the airport to the suburban residence set aside for him in Kuntsevo; Harriman, to the mansion in Ostrovsky Lane where he was to stay. The other members of the delegation were put up at the National Hotel. The guests had little time for rest: Churchill and Harriman were to meet with Stalin that evening. Also present at that first meeting were Molotov, Voroshilov, and Archibald Clark Kerr, the British Ambassador.

It was the first time the head of the Soviet government had met with the leader of the British Empire. Churchill's agitation was clearly betrayed by his fidgetiness. He said there was simply no limit to his joy at being in the heroic city of Moscow. Stalin, by contrast, was very restrained. His face was impassive, as if for him this were a routine meeting. But in the first moment he had sized Churchill up in a glance that seemed to say: "So this is him—the pillar of die-hard British Conservatives".

Stalin invited everyone to be seated at that end of the long table which was nearer to his desk. He himself sat in the armchair at the head of the table, with Churchill at his right hand and Harriman at his left. Boxes holding various types of cigarettes were arrayed on the table, and there were bottles of mineral water and glasses. Pencils of different colours lay beside Stalin's place—he had a habit of gathering them into a bunch and then rolling them across his palm as a sort of exercise for his weakened hand.

Churchill began the conversation by inquiring about the situation on the Soviet-German front. Stalin said that it was relatively normal around Moscow, but that things were going harder on the southern fronts. The Nazis were advancing with greater force than had been expected in the direction of Baku and Stalin-

grad. In some places they had been able to break through the lines of the Red Army. Stalin remarked that he just could not understand how Hitler could have gathered so many troops and tanks together into a single fist.

"I think," Stalin continued, "that Hitler has pumped all he can out of Europe. But we are determined to hold Stalingrad. The Red Army is preparing to launch a major attack north of Moscow in order to draw Nazi forces away from the southern fronts."

Churchill became noticeably gloomier. After listening to this description of the grave situation on the Soviet-German front, he would now have to present reasons why the promise to open a second front in Europe in 1942 would not be made good, why the trans-Channel invasion was being put off once again.

Churchill took a roundabout approach. He began by telling in detail about the troops, arms, and ammunition that the British and Americans were concentrating in the British Isles. Then he spoke about the possibility that a large number of German fighting units might be brought together in the west, which, he said, could greatly endanger Allied operations in Normandy. Finally he said, as if in passing, that preparations for the amphibious assault would be completed in the following year; too much haste, he added, would involve great risks.

Stalin protested vigorously against this plan, and disputed the figures Churchill had cited concerning the size of the German forces in Western Europe. He maintained that in fact these forces were considerably smaller, and that the divisions on hand were not up to full strength. As for the risk Churchill had mentioned, Stalin said, it seemed to him that someone who was unwilling to take risks could never win a war. Churchill was forced to agree in principle, but argued it was senseless to sacrifice troops that would be needed so badly the next summer.

A heated discussion followed, during which Stalin declared that he was completely unable to accept Churchill's statement, although he realised there was nothing he could do to make the British government act otherwise. He repeated that the Soviet government disagreed totally. Churchill, in turn, tried to move away from this unpleasant topic by raising another problem. He outlined plans for operation Torch—the invasion of North Africa—which was to be undertaken in October of 1942. Chur-

chill said he thought this operation would take Italy out of the war.

He took a clean sheet of paper from the stack on the table and sketched a map of Europe in the shape of a crocodile's head with the jaws opened towards the British Isles. Churchill showed his drawing to Stalin, and said:

"I want to attack the soft underbelly of this crocodile." With a pencil he pointed to the Adriatic Sea and the Balkans.

Then he began to speak of the role the United States should play in the invasion of North Africa. "My friend Harriman," he concluded, "can tell us about this in more detail."

Harriman supported Churchill's plan, adding that, as far as he knew, President Roosevelt wanted to begin the operation in North Africa as soon as possible.

"Despite our serious problems in the Pacific," Harriman said, "the President's chief concern is the war in Europe."

Stalin listened patiently to all of this, and asked a number of concrete questions about the operation in North Africa. In particular, he inquired about the political reaction it would produce in France and Spain. Churchill said he thought the reaction in France would be positive. As for Spain, that interested him but little.

The conversation then reverted to the problem of a second front in Western Europe. Churchill stressed repeatedly the importance of an operation in the Balkans, which, he maintained, would become possible after Anglo-American forces had successfully landed in North Africa. The conversation continued late into the evening, but still Churchill did not obtain Soviet agreement to the change of the original plan agreed on by the three powers, which called for the Western Allies to land in Normandy in 1942.

The Balkan Variant

Churchill's idea about launching operations against the "soft underbelly" of Europe from North Africa is proof that even at this time the Prime Minister cherished plans for landing Anglo-American forces in the Balkans and thus entering the countries of South-East Europe before the arrival of the Red Army. The root motive was to maintain reactionary regimes in the countries

that bordered on the Soviet Union, thus setting up once again a so-called *cordon sanitaire* against Bolshevism, as the Entente powers had done after the First World War.

Later, in his memoirs, Churchill denied that he wanted to substitute an invasion of the Balkans for a landing in France. But the facts, and the testimony of contemporaries, are against him in this.

In the end, Churchill's Balkan scheme was foiled by the firm opposition of the Soviet Union, and also by the stand Roosevelt took. He evidently understood that the British strategy also had an anti-American edge, inasmuch as the establishment of British domination in South-East Europe was not in accord with Washington's plans for broadening its own influence in this area, too. It is worthy of note, however, that even after the plan for an operation in the Balkans had been abandoned, Churchill tried to pressure General Eisenhower, then commander of the Anglo-American expeditionary force, into getting US support for London's Balkan strategy.

Churchill pushed his idea for a Balkan operation with particular insistence at the end of 1943, when the Big Three met in Teheran. This was after Britain and the USA had once again declined to fulfill their commitment to land troops in the north of France. Churchill had also explored the ground regarding his Balkan variant a year earlier, during his visit to Moscow; the idea of landing Anglo-American forces in South-East Europe was thus one of long standing. It is clear from all this that for Churchill victory over the common enemy took second place to strengthening the position of British imperialism in Europe, with special emphasis on the fight against communism.

It were thoughts such as these which occupied the Prime Minister of Great Britain while the men of the Red Army fought and died to defend their homeland, and all of humanity, against fascist enslavement. During the summer of 1942, the people of the Soviet Union anxiously followed the developments on the Southern Front, where the enemy, despite huge losses, was pushing stubbornly towards the Volga and the approaches to the Caucasus. No effort was spared by Soviet people to help the front. Thousands and thousands of fighting men gave their all to halt the enemy's advance. The Soviet Union was at this time in especially great need of effective help from its Allies.

An Anglo-American landing in France would have played a decisive role, and this was what the people of the Soviet Union were expecting. But London and Washington kept postponing such an operation for motives that had nothing to do with bringing the war to a speedy end.

The Joint Communiqué

Stalin was in an excellent mood as he received the guests who had gathered in the Catherine Hall of the Kremlin Palace for dinner at eight. It was as if the preceding day's unpleasant conversation with Churchill and Harriman concerning a second front had never taken place. Churchill, however, was feeling somewhat daunted at the beginning of the evening. Clearly he had been distraught by the sharp exchange between himself and Stalin: he puffed nervously on his cigar, and frequently resorted to the cognac. As the time wore on, though, the Prime Minister became more animated.

Soon Churchill and Stalin were engaged in a lively conversation ranging from military tactics to problems of post-war arrangements. Every so often Harriman would inject some remark. In particular, it was he who raised the question of a possible meeting between Stalin and Roosevelt, and asked when and where this might take place. Stalin observed that such a meeting would be of great significance, and suggested it might be held in the winter, when he would be less busy with the affairs of the front. Various possible sites were named, from the Aleutian Isles to Iceland.

Stalin then took up current questions. He expressed displeasure at the delay in sending convoys to Soviet northern ports and said he would like to see the governments of Britain and the USA take measures to speed up deliveries. Churchill and Harriman promised to keep these points in mind.

Towards the end of the dinner, Stalin began to make toasts in honour of the various branches of the services, addressing by turns the different marshals and generals who commanded them. The only foreigner Stalin honoured with a toast was President Roosevelt. Churchill was plainly offended, but swallowed the pill in silence.

Coffee was served at a smaller table in a room adjacent to

the Catherine Hall. Here the casual talk was resumed; Stalin and Churchill reminisced about different periods in Soviet-British relations. The subject of Lady Astor's visit to Moscow in the 1930s came up. Stalin said Lady Astor maintained at the time that Churchill was finished finally, that he would never again play any part on the political scene. Stalin thought differently, though. He told Lady Astor that if there was a war Churchill would become Prime Minister.

Churchill thanked Stalin for this compliment on his abilities as a political leader.

"And I must admit," Churchill said, "that my own attitude towards the Soviet Union has not always been friendly—especially just after the First World War."

"I know that," Stalin said in a conciliatory tone. "There is no denying that you have been consistent in your opposition to the Soviet system."

"Can you forgive me for all that?" Churchill asked.

Stalin, with eyes slightly narrowed, looked at Churchill silently for a moment. Then he answered calmly:

"It's for God to forgive—not me. In the end, history will judge us."

An incident occurred during this dinner which at first alarmed and then greatly amused everyone present. Stalin, Churchill, and Harriman were engaged in a lively conversation over coffee and ice-cream when suddenly they were interrupted by the crash of breaking crockery and exclamations. Turning round, we saw a man prostrate on the floor, surrounded by fragments of china, bottles, and bits of glass. Other guests were crowding around, hiding him from view.

Stalin, Churchill, and Harriman approached in the company of their interpreters, and everyone made way. We now saw that the man stretched out on the floor, face purple and eyes blinking foolishly, was the Prime Minister's personal bodyguard and aide Commander Thompson, or Tommy, as Churchill called him fondly. The figure towering over him was Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, the British ambassador. He was in his gold-embroidered frock-coat, and at his side hung a jewel-encrusted sword of honour, and a moiré ribbon was draped across his shoulder. But what a sight he was! Pink ice-cream was running down his frock-coat and ribbon, and his sword was speckled with coffee

grounds. Sir Archibald was visibly struggling to regain his composure so as to reply to Churchill's troubled and bewildered gaze.

"May I ask what has happened?" the Prime Minister inquired.

At last the ambassador found his tongue, and blurted out:

"Well, Sir, as you know, Tommy can drink a terrific amount of wine, and it never makes him drunk. . ."

"That's what I like about him," Churchill put in, smiling. He had guessed already that nothing terrible had taken place.

"But this time he overdid it, competing with his Russian colleagues," Kerr went on. "And as bad luck would have it, it seemed to him just at that moment that you, Sir, needed his protection. He jumped up, lost his balance, and grabbed for the tablecloth. And as you see. . ."

Kerr pointed to his soiled frock-coat, and then the still prostrate Thompson. Everyone laughed. Thompson was quickly put on his feet and helped out the door, and that was that.

At break of day Churchill, Harriman, and the persons accompanying them—including a puffy-faced but already quite sober Thompson—arrived at Central Airport. At five o'clock, after the official leave-taking, they left for Teheran, from where they continued to the capitals of their countries. On August 18, when they had already arrived at their destinations, an official Anglo-Soviet communiqué was issued. It said:

"Negotiations have taken place in Moscow between President of the Council of the People's Commissars of USSR, J. V. Stalin, and Prime Minister of Great Britain, Mr. Winston Churchill, in which Mr. Harriman, representing the President of the United States of America, participated. There took part in the discussions the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, V. M. Molotov, Marshal K. E. Voroshilov, from the Soviet side; the British Ambassador, Sir A. Clark Kerr, C.I.G.S., Sir A. Brooke, and other responsible representatives of the British armed forces, and Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Sir A. Cadogan, from the British side.

A number of decisions were reached covering the field of the war against Hitlerite Germany and her associates in Europe. This just war of liberation both Governments are determined to carry on with all their power and energy until the complete destruction of Hitlerism and any similar tyranny has been

achieved. The discussions, which were carried on in an atmosphere of cordiality and complete sincerity, provided an opportunity of reaffirming the existence of the close friendships and understanding between the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the United States of America, in entire accordance with the Allied relationships existing between them."¹

The communiqué, naturally, did not contain the slightest hint about the serious disagreements among the Allies on the question of opening a second front, or about the heated discussions that had taken place. This was only natural for that period. A fierce war was being fought against a crafty enemy, and the Allies, of course, had to appear united and unshakable in their determination to achieve victory.

Months of Concern

The summer of 1942 was dry and hot. Moscow was stifling, and the charms of nature seemed especially sweet whenever it was possible to get out into the suburbs, even if only for a few hours. The life of our group at the Commissariat was little by little settling into an accustomed routine. Those of us who had not had living quarters in Moscow before the war were given rooms or apartments, and at last were able to move out of the Commissariat building. Quarters were arranged there for the increasing number of employees who were being called to Moscow from Kuibyshev. Some of them remained for a long time; a few did not go back at all. A few of the cottages were reopened on the land which the Commissariat owned on the Klyazma River, and employees took turns spending their free time there.

Little garden plots appeared in the meadows along the river; those who wanted could grow vegetables there. The free hours which could be devoted to these gardens were few, and most of them were not tended with any skill; nonetheless they yielded cucumbers, carrots, and cabbage—a welcome addition to our meagre rations.

¹ Winston S. Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, Bantam Books, New York 1962, p. 436.

Several theatres which had been evacuated returned to Moscow. There were organ and symphony concerts in the Grand Hall of the Conservatoire, and at the Central House of the Red Army the illustrious Song and Dance Company was once again performing under the direction of its founder, Professor Alexandrov. *The Front*, a new play by Alexander Korneichuk, was having a successful run at the Moscow Art Theatre. I remember the première. The house was packed. Most of the audience were military men, officers in field uniform with the green front-line insignia. Those who came to the capital from the frontlines on leave or on business tried not to miss their chance to see this play, which created quite a sensation at the time.

The conflict on the stage was between veteran officers who had fought in the Civil War and young military specialists. It was unquestionably topical and understandable to the men from the front. At a time when the Red Army was still forced to retreat, the question of authority and competence of commanding officers was particularly urgent. It took some time to understand the need for reorganisation that would combine the experience gained in past wars with the deeper knowledge, energy, initiative, and quick reaction of the younger experts. The play appeared at just this moment.

The play's success was also due to the fact that its author, a renowned dramatist who had worked as a front-line correspondent since the first days of the war (in 1943 Korneichuk was appointed deputy to the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs and placed in charge of the Slavic countries), had grasped the deep essence of a problem that arose in the first period of the war: the old commanders, although rich in experience, hardened in battle, and selfless, were not always equal to the new demands being made on them, and this seriously complicated things in the active army.

Although the play dealt with a complex situation—a sharp conflict between the old school and the young specialists, it left its audiences with a feeling of optimism, of confidence in ultimate victory. It was said that *The Front* had won Stalin's approval, and this must have been so, since the script of the play was printed in *Pravda*, thus reaching millions of people.

The other outstanding cultural event of this period was Dmitri Shostakovich's *Leningrad Symphony*, which was first

performed in Moscow in the summer of 1942. The impression it produced in those days, when the Nazi advance was still under-way, was especially strong.

Everyone, whether at the front or in the rear, was engrossed in reading brilliant front-line reports and stories by Mikhail Sholokhov, Alexei Tolstoy, and Ilya Ehrenburg, and poems by Konstantin Simonov and Alexei Surkov, all of which expressed the deep patriotic feelings of the people, their burning hatred for the enemy who was trampling the soil of their native land, and their determination to stand firm and achieve victory.

In those difficult months during the summer and autumn of 1942, this patriotism helped Soviet citizens to bear all their misfortunes and to preserve—in spite of setbacks on the front—their courage, steadfastness, and readiness to give their all in the struggle.

And in truth this was a hard, a very hard time. After the brilliant victory won by Soviet forces just outside Moscow at the end of 1941, the hope had sprung up that although fierce battles were still to be fought the enemy would advance no farther, that the fortunes of war had turned in favour of our country. The second summer of the war, however, brought with it new and bitter trials. Breaking through our lines of defence in the south-eastern sector, the enemy took Rostov and pushed on towards Stalingrad and the Caucasus. Hitler was in a hurry to seize the breadbaskets of the Stavropol and Kuban regions, and rich oilfields of Maikop, Grozny, and Baku. The communiqués issued by the Sovinformburo listed more and more cities which had fallen into Nazi hands. Their names were like heart-rending cries: Pyatigorsk, Yessentuki, Kislovodsk. . .

We continued to work twelve or fourteen hours a day. There was a lot to be done: the flurry of diplomatic activity continued in the People's Commissariat without interruption. But our thoughts carried us away to the south-east, to the steppes between the Don and the Volga and the foothills of the Caucasus, where the Nazis, in spite of their losses, continued to push back the Red Army. There was a large map of the Soviet Union hanging in our room, and each day, after reading the latest communiqué, we would sadly move the tiny red flags farther into the heartland of our country.

Everyone was asking himself: when will it end? Can it really

be true that there is no force capable of stopping Hitler's war machine? But the Nazis were defeated outside Moscow, weren't they? That was plain proof that they could be stopped and driven back.

We who were involved in the Soviet government's talks with London and Washington naturally were particularly aware that the Nazis were taking advantage of the absence of a second front in Europe to transfer fresh troops from France and other regions to the Soviet-German front. Thus the Western democracies had done yet another good turn for Hitler.

All of this forced the Soviet people and the Communist Party to make a super-human effort, to "pull themselves together", as our newspapers put it back then, in order to block the enemy's path, to halt the Nazis and then to defeat them, relying mainly on our own strength. Everyone realised this imperative need. Only a few, though, knew then of the practical measures already being taken by the Supreme Command of the Soviet armed forces which would make it possible, once the enemy had been stopped at Stalingrad, to launch a sweeping counter-offensive and begin to drive the Nazi hordes out of our homeland.

The Moscow Conference

A Changed Situation

The need for a meeting of the foreign ministers of the three leading powers in the anti-Hitler coalition—the Soviet Union, the United States, and Great Britain—was one of long standing. The conduct of war against the common foe, the political problems and disagreements that had appeared in the course of developing concerted military efforts, the new tasks arising as victory over Nazi Germany drew nearer, the need to come to agreement on key questions concerning post-war settlement—all of these demanded high-level consultations, an exchange of opinions, and the making of joint decisions.

A number of bilateral meetings at the ministerial level took place in the first years of the war: between Molotov and Eden, Molotov and Hull, Eden and Hull. But the three men had not yet met at the same time, and thus it was natural that practical

questions involved in such a meeting began to be discussed in the summer of 1943.

Churchill initially suggested that the conference be held in London or another city in the British Isles. Roosevelt expressed the opinion that it would be better to choose a more peaceful and out-of-the-way spot. He named Casablanca, Tunisia, and Sicily as possibilities. Since Cordell Hull would be participating in the conference the American side insisted, on account of the advanced age of the Secretary of State, that the meeting place should be as comfortable and as close to the USA as possible. Roosevelt even intimated at the start that if a more distant site was selected he would not risk Hull's health, but rather send Deputy Secretary of State Wallace.

While the discussion of where it would be best to meet was still going on (the Soviet side suggested Moscow, and the British raised no objections to this), the plan to send Wallace in place of Hull began to raise serious doubts. Many knew that on more than one occasion Wallace had publicly spoken out against cooperating with the Soviet Union. When it was suggested that he travel to Moscow, he declared that he did not see any sense in such a conference and thought nothing would come of the talks. Evidently Hull realised the absurdity of the situation and advised Roosevelt to "have a second thought" about sending Wallace. He declared that he was ready to go to Moscow and take part in a foreign ministers conference. In the end, Roosevelt gave his consent to this.

It should be noted that the hesitations of Roosevelt and Hull were also due to Hull's never having been on an airplane in his life, and to his general prejudice against air travel. His understanding of the need for the three ministers to meet, however, won out over his hostility to the airplane. So as to shorten the flight as much as possible, Hull travelled from the USA to North Africa on a cruiser. After landing in Casablanca, he flew to Moscow via Cairo and Teheran.

It had been decided by Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt in their correspondence before the Moscow Conference was called that what was needed was a broad exchange of opinions on all questions, without any limitations by a hard-and-fast agenda. If serious differences remained on certain problems, these could be settled at the upcoming meeting of the three leaders: it had

been by this time generally agreed in Moscow, Washington, and London that such a meeting should be held, although as yet nothing had been decided regarding time and place.

The delegations of the United States and Britain arrived in Moscow on the afternoon of October 18. The weather that day was uncommonly warm and clear for autumn in Moscow. The grass at Central Airport was summery green, and the flags of the three nations of the anti-Hitler coalition were barely stirred by the breeze. The guests were met by Molotov, Litvinov, and other Soviet officials. The plane bearing the British Foreign Secretary was first to arrive. When Eden appeared, the band struck up the "Meeting March". Eden went to the microphone and said:

"I am very happy to have arrived in Moscow for this conference and at the same time return the visit Mr. Molotov made to London last year. I am looking forward to the upcoming talks with him and Mr. Hull."

Eden and Molotov then reviewed the honour guard. The national anthems of Great Britain and the USSR were performed. The welcoming ceremony had barely been concluded when an American bomber appeared in the sky. Shortly afterwards the US Secretary of State stepped onto Soviet soil.

"It gives me special pleasure," Hull said, "to arrive in Moscow—the capital of a great country which has joined my country in a common cause. I am also pleased at this opportunity to pay a return visit to Mr. Molotov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. I am looking forward to the upcoming talks with him and Mr. Eden."

Hull was a tall, thin old man. He looked tired, and seemed to find it a chore to make the speech traditional on such occasions. Once the ceremony had been concluded by the march of the honour guard, Hull, smiling wanly, asked Molotov if it was far to the residence of the US ambassador, where he had expressed the wish to stay during his visit to the Soviet capital. The hint was taken, and everyone hurried towards the waiting cars.

The following is a list of participants in the Moscow conference:

British delegation: Anthony Eden, William Strang, Charles Harvey, V. Lawford, D. Howard, J. Ward, D. Garrison, J. Coul-

son, D. Wilson, D. Dashwood, and also nine military experts and nine members of auxiliary personnel.

American delegation: Cordell Hull, Averell Harriman, J. Dunn, G. Hackworth, S. Gray, M. MacDermott, Ch. Bohlen, and also ten civilian and seven military experts.

Soviet delegation: V. M. Molotov, A. Ya. Vyshinsky, K. E. Voroshilov, M. M. Litvinov, V. A. Sergeyeve, A. A. Gryzlov, G. F. Saksin.

Experts: A. P. Pavlov, Ya. Z. Surits, G. N. Zarubin, K. V. Novikov, A. I. Lavrentyev, S. A. Golunsky, A. M. Baranovsky, B. F. Podtserob.

The Secretariat: V. M. Berezhkov, Ye. Y. Yerofeyev, A. A. Khatuntsev.

In accordance with British wishes, Anthony Eden and some of those accompanying him were housed in the British embassy, on the Sofiiskaya Embankment, across from the Kremlin.

Cordell Hull stayed in the residence of the American ambassador. At that time the US embassy occupied a building opposite the Kremlin, adjacent to the National Hotel. But the ambassadorial residence was located in Spaso-Peskovsky Lane off the Arbat—the Americans called it Spaso House. Hull was later to recall in his memoirs the pleasant stay he had in this quiet corner of Moscow. Four other members of the American delegation were at Spaso House as well.

All the others from the British and American groups, and also the crews of the British and American planes that brought the delegations to Moscow—in all 45 Americans and 40 British—were put up at the National Hotel. The conference's work site was a house belonging to the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs on Spiridonovka Street (now Alexei Tolstoi Street).

A varied programme was planned in addition to the working meetings: visits to the Bolshoi Theatre for *Swan Lake* and the opera *Ivan Susanin*; a concert by the Red Army Song and Dance Company under the direction of Professor Alexandrov; a screening of the latest newsreels, including coverage of the delegations' arrival in Moscow, and also of the films *The Battle of Orel* and *Švejk Against Hitler*. If delegation members wished, they could also visit a collective farm, one of the larger factories, the university, a school, or a hospital.

A preliminary meeting of the three ministers was held the day before the conference officially opened. It took place in Molotov's office in the Kremlin. The three men agreed that the conference should get right to work, without any long speeches. The first plenary session of the conference was due to open on October 19, in the afternoon. Earlier in the day Eden and Molotov, in accordance with protocol, had paid separate calls on Hull.

As Hull later wrote in his memoirs, he decided to use this meeting with the British Foreign Secretary to discuss tactical questions. In particular, Hull suggested that the existence of a united front between the British and American delegations be kept secret from the Soviet side.

"It is important," the Secretary of State told Eden, "that the Soviets not get the impression that the British and American groups are conspiring against them to present a united front against Russia."

Eden agreed to this.

Hull informed Molotov at their first meeting that he and Eden had agreed that each of the delegations should be prepared to conduct talks with either of the others on a completely equal and independent footing.

The House in Spiridonovka Street

The house on Spiridonovka, which the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs used for receptions, once belonged to the wealthy textile manufacturer Savva Morozov, well known as a patron of the progressive writers, artists, and performers of his time. He frequently came to the aid of the Bolsheviks (he once rescued Bauman, who was being pursued by the police, by taking him into his carriage), and would even give considerable sums from his capital to "the revolution" when necessary.

The Morozov house is truly a work of art in its architecture and interior decorations. Surrounded by an old park, it delights the eye with its severe late-Gothic proportions. The interior holds works by the best sculptors and painters of the early 20th century; the stained-glass windows by Vrubel (still extant) and the wrought-iron railings of the inner staircases, designed by the same artist, are especially fine. The stately halls, each in a

different style, are decorated with pictures by the Dutch masters and other artists and cabinets filled with fine china, statuettes, and silver plates—all unique works of art.

The plenary sessions of the conference were held in a white marble hall in the Empire style. Under the enormous crystal chandelier stood a round table draped in a cream-coloured tablecloth. In a wooden stand at its centre were the little flags of the three participating nations. Arm-chairs for the heads of the delegations and several rows of chairs for other participants were arranged around the table.

The working schedule was as follows: a plenary session was opened each morning at ten and went on until one in the afternoon. A forty-minute lunch break followed. Everyone went to the dining room, where a long table covered with a white tablecloth stood before the high fire-place. Cold snacks, fruit, and soft drinks were served, as well as coffee and tea. Afterwards the session continued until five, when there was a break for dinner. A second plenary session was held in the evening; at times it went on until after midnight. Several evenings, however, were left free for visits to theatres and concert halls.

I remember a curious episode I witnessed during a performance of the opera *Ivan Susanin*. As usual in such cases, the central box in the Bolshoi was put at the disposal of the guests of honour. Eden, Harriman, and Molotov, together with their interpreters, sat in the first row. Cordell Hull did not usually attend the evening events. He would say he was tired, and depart for Spaso House. Above the box hung the national flags of the three participants. When the scene of a ball at the palace of the Polish king was being shown, Eden turned towards Molotov and said with a smile:

"See what nice people these Poles are—it's simply a pleasure to be friendly with them."

The Poles whom the British Foreign Secretary had in mind, of course, were the émigré government in Britain, with which the Soviet Union had broken off relations over its repeated acts of anti-Soviet provocation.

Eden's remark brought a frown to Molotov's face. "In real life things are more complicated," he said icily.

Later in the opera, when Susanin was being murdered by the Poles on stage, Molotov turned towards Eden:

"You see, our relations with the Poles have had their rough spots. As for us, we want good relations—with an independent and friendly Poland," he said. After a short pause, Eden answered:

"I understand you. But you must understand us too—it was because of Poland that we entered this war, after all."

The problem of the Soviet Union's relations with the Polish émigré government was long to remain the object of discussions, and sometimes of serious disagreements, between the Soviet Union and its Western Allies.

Representatives of Britain and the USA tried to get the USSR to restore diplomatic relations with the reactionary Polish government in emigration. In August of 1942, this government had withdrawn from the USSR Polish military units formed on Soviet territory in accordance with the Polish-Soviet agreement of July 30, 1941. It was demanding that the borders established by the Riga Treaty be restored, which would have meant letting Poland keep areas inhabited by Ukrainians and Byelorussians. As already mentioned, it was not above acting in collusion with the Nazis. The Soviet government, quite naturally, refused to have any dealings whatever with such people, who moreover did not at all represent the people of Poland languishing under the Nazi yoke.

It was certainly not in the interests of bettering Soviet-Polish relations that the US and British governments urged the restoration of relations with the émigré Polish government; their only concern was to shore up the position of the Polish reactionaries, whom they saw—with every reason—as reliable agents for themselves. The Soviet government refused to restore diplomatic relations with this anti-Soviet government, regarding it as alien to the people of Poland and unmindful of their fundamental interests, chief among which was lasting friendship with the USSR.

But let us return to the Moscow Conference. At its first plenary session, which opened—as was scheduled—on October 19, agreement was reached on an agenda. The Soviet representative distributed among the participants a draft agenda, which listed as the first item measures to bring the war to an early end and, as the second, the signing of a declaration by the Allied powers. He remarked that it would be desirable to agree on a precise

date for the Anglo-American invasion of northern France. The agenda was adopted, and a general discussion followed.

The next session, on October 20, was entirely devoted to problems connected with the opening of a second front. Britain's General Ismay, and also the USA's General Deane, presented in detail the Anglo-American plans for a trans-Channel landing in the spring of 1944. They noted, however, that these plans could be realised only on two conditions. The first was that the Allies achieve a significant reduction in the number of German fighter planes in North-Western Europe by the time of the landing. The second was that Nazi Germany's ground forces not exceed a certain limit at that time.

When asked whether the promise Roosevelt and Churchill had given in June of 1943 to launch an invasion of northern France in the spring of 1944 remained in force, Eden and Hull said that in principle this was so. The two men offered assurances that the promise would be carried out to the letter, and added that it had been confirmed at the Anglo-American conference in Quebec, although it was still contingent on the conditions just mentioned. At any rate, preparatory measures, according to the British and American representatives, were in full swing. But still they did not name an exact date. Molotov said the Soviet government would take these declarations into consideration, and also the statements made by generals Ismay and Deane. He expressed hope that this time the invasion would really take place.

The opening of a second front, as noted already, was being put off from year to year by the groups in power in London and Washington. In both Britain and the USA, however, large segments of the public were energetically demanding an immediate landing in France, which would have been a giant step towards crushing fascism as quickly as possible. While Eden and Hull were in Moscow they received numerous telegrams from Britain, the USA, Canada, and other countries calling for the Western Allies to open a second front as early as possible. People everywhere had come to realise that by prolonging the war the governments of the USA and Britain were condemning nations to new sacrifices and sufferings.

The Four-Nation Declaration

Considerable time was devoted at the October 21 plenary session to discussing the draft of a declaration by the Allied powers on the problem of general security. It was doubted whether the conference had the power to adopt a declaration of four (the USA, Britain, the USSR, and China), since only three powers were formally represented. Furthermore, the Soviet side did not want to complicate its relations with Japan and thought it would be inadvisable to make it seem that quadripartite talks, including Chiang Kaishek's China, had taken place during the Moscow Conference. At the very start of the discussion, therefore, Molotov suggested that the conference consider a declaration of three, rather than four. Later, he said, when the Chinese government had given its approval, this could be turned into a four-power declaration. Hull objected, stressing the important psychological effect a declaration by all four powers would produce. The lively exchange of opinions on this question continued even during the breaks between sessions.

The weather was fine, and Hull and Molotov strolled about the grounds, along the paths sprinkled with yellow sand. Meanwhile they went on with their talk about the declaration. Hull said that the American government thought it of the highest importance for the declaration to be made not by three powers but by four, including China. Molotov continued to express doubts. He maintained that while the Soviet Union was bearing the main burden of the war against Nazi Germany it would not be wise to make China a party to the declaration, since this might provoke an undesirable reaction from Japan. As things stood, anything that might worsen relations between Japan and the Soviet Union should be avoided. And so, the session left the question of a declaration undecided.

In the days that followed the draft declaration came under discussion repeatedly. It was only at the end of the conference (after Hull's meeting with Stalin, described later) that the Soviet side agreed to a four-power declaration. Molotov asked whether the time remaining was sufficient to get an answer from Chongquing (the capital of China during the war years) and whether the Chinese ambassador in Moscow would be able to sign the declaration together with the representatives of the

other three powers. Hull answered that he would handle the matter personally, and said he hoped the Chinese ambassador would be given the necessary powers before the conference was over. And indeed the answer from Chongqing was received without delay. On October 30, the three ministers of foreign affairs and Fu Bingchang, China's ambassador to the USSR, signed the declaration. It read:

"The Governments of the United States of America, United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and China:

united in their determination, in accordance with the Declaration by the United Nations of January 1, 1942, and subsequent declarations, to continue hostilities against those Axis powers with which they respectively are at war until such powers have laid down their arms on the basis of unconditional surrender;

conscious of their responsibility to secure the liberation of themselves and the peoples allied with them from the menace of aggression;

recognizing the necessity of ensuring a rapid and orderly transition from war to peace and of establishing and maintaining international peace and security with the least diversion of the world's human and economic resources for armaments;

jointly declare:

1. That their united action, pledged for the prosecution of the war against their respective enemies, will be continued for the organization and maintenance of peace and security.

2. That those of them at war with a common enemy will act together in all matters relating to the surrender and disarmament of that enemy.

3. That they will take all measures deemed by them to be necessary to provide against any violation of the terms imposed upon the enemy.

4. That they recognize the necessity of establishing at the earliest practicable date a general international organization, based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving states, and open to membership by all such states, large and small, for the maintenance of international peace and security.

5. That for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security pending the reestablishment of law and order and the inauguration of a system of general security, they will con-

sult with one another and as occasion requires with other members of the United Nations with a view to joint action on behalf of the community of nations.

6. That after the termination of hostilities they will not employ their military forces within the territories of other states except for the purposes envisaged in this declaration and after joint consultation.

7. That they will confer and cooperate with one another and with other members of the United Nations to bring about a practicable general agreement with respect to the regulation of armaments in the post war period.

*V. Molotov
Cordell Hull
Anthony Eden
Fu Bingchang*

Moscow, October 30, 1943."

The four-power declaration undoubtedly played an important role. It laid the foundation for post-war arrangements and set forth certain basic principles by which the United Nations Organization would abide in the future.

In Stalin's Office

During the Moscow Conference the heads of the US and British delegations were individually received by Stalin, and discussed with him a broad range of questions relating both to the conduct of the war against the common enemy and to post-war settlement. Molotov was present at both talks, each of which also included the ambassador of the country involved and translators. I acted as Stalin's interpreter during his meeting with Hull. Charles Bohlen was the interpreter for the American side. The meeting took place in Stalin's office, on the afternoon of October 25.

In preparation for this important conversation, I looked through the file on Soviet-American relations once again. At the time I was working as Molotov's assistant on American affairs, and thus the material was, on the whole, familiar. Nonetheless it was necessary to review, with special attention, the documents Stalin had read. He had a phenomenal memory, and might bring up all sorts of concrete matters with which I,

as his interpreter, would need to be familiar in order to arrive at the most exact translation into English. What is more, Bohlen, as mentioned earlier, did not know Russian particularly well; at times he needed help, and for this it was necessary for me to have a quick grasp of what Hull might say.

Twenty minutes before the appointed time, I locked up my papers in the safe, put a few pencils into my pocket, picked up a notebook, and stepped out into the long corridor, where the high windows looked into the courtyard. Molotov had offices both on Kuznetsky Most Street and in the Kremlin, and I had a pass admitting me to both. It was not, however, good for the wing of the building where Stalin's quarters were: to reach them one had to go down a separate corridor, guarded by a sentry. A special pass was required, which had to be obtained in advance.

The duty officer directed me to a waiting room. There was a table covered with a white cloth. At its edge stood an array of bottles—mineral water and fruit drinks. Clean glasses stood upside down on a large black metal tray with a bright floral design. The table was ringed with rows of bentwood chairs. There was nothing else in the room. I sat down at the table and began to wait. Five minutes before three o'clock—when the meeting was to begin—the duty officer entered the room and said I could go on into Stalin's office. As I was crossing the room, the door opened and Cordell Hull, Averell Harriman, and Charles Bohlen, stepped in from the corridor. I greeted them and went right along into Stalin's office.

The office was functionally furnished. Opposite the door through which I entered was a desk with telephones of different colours. Perpendicular to it stood a little table and two deep arm-chairs covered in dark-brown leather. A longish box, containing maps that could be pulled out like window-shades, was fastened to one wall. Beside this stood a long conference table with a green cloth, and around it a great many chairs. It was at this table that Stalin usually talked to foreign visitors. Above the desk was an enlarged photograph of Lenin reading *Pravda*; on the other walls were portraits of outstanding Russian military men—Suvorov, Kutuzov, and Nakhimov.

Several members of the Political Bureau were in the office,

and a group of people I did not know. Evidently a conference of some sort had just taken place. Everyone had already gotten up from the table; Stalin was pacing the rug. Turning to me, he nodded briefly and said to the others in the office:

"The Americans are here already. That will have to be all—I won't keep you any longer."

Everyone left the room without delay. Only Molotov remained. I had prepared a brief release for the press on the meeting with Hull, and now showed it to Stalin. He glanced at a few lines of it, and then said:

"Show it to Molotov after the talk. He will decide."

Stalin went over to the desk and pressed the call button, adding, "Well, it's time."

The duty officer entered.

"Call them in," Stalin ordered.

The Meeting with Hull

A few seconds later Hull, Harriman, and Bohlen stepped in. Hull, tall and lean, with sparse gray hair, was dressed in a severe black suit. A dark tie with a bright striped pattern stood out against his snow-white, stiffly starched shirt.

Stalin advanced towards Hull with his hand held out, and then greeted Harriman and Bohlen. Taking Hull by the arm, he led him towards the long table. After greetings had been exchanged everyone sat down. Stalin took the second chair from the head of the table, on the side where the maps were, and offered Hull the chair opposite. Molotov sat at the head of the table, as if he were to preside. I sat to Hull's right, and Bohlen and Harriman to his left. Thus the chair to Stalin's left remained vacant.

Turning to Hull, Stalin welcomed him once again, and asked how his long trip had gone.

"Very well—despite my expectations," Hull answered with a slight smile. "This was the first time I've ever travelled by plane," he explained, "and I was a little wary. I crossed the Atlantic on a cruiser so as to spend as little time in the air as possible. In the meantime President Roosevelt's personal plane, Sacred Cow, which he kindly placed at my disposal, crossed from the USA to North-West Africa. From there we

came to Moscow via Cairo, the Persian Gulf, and Teheran. The flight went smoothly, and I wasn't the least bit uncomfortable, despite my prejudice against passenger planes."

"So you see," said Stalin, lighting up his pipe, "there was no reason for President Roosevelt to worry about your age making it difficult for you to come to Moscow. The three foreign ministers could have met somewhere else, of course. But you know Molotov is my first deputy. Besides his diplomatic work, he has many other important responsibilities—some of them connected with the development of vital types of weapons—and it would have been very hard for him to leave the country for long. The conference could only have been very brief. And of course it would have been impossible for us to meet."

"I must admit," answered Hull, drawing out his words and evidently weighing every phrase with special care, "you are quite right. I highly appreciate this opportunity of meeting you, Mr. Chairman, and for this I am prepared to put up with any discomforts connected with the long journey. Let me tell you in confidence that when it was finally decided that the three foreign ministers were to meet in Moscow, and President Roosevelt, considering my advanced years and my present poor health, suggested in all seriousness that my deputy should make the trip to Moscow in my stead, I vigorously protested. I said that our common cause demanded that I meet with Marshal Stalin, especially since we hope that in the near future it can be arranged for you to meet with President Roosevelt. I stood firm, and as you see—here I am!"

"Excellent!" said Stalin. "I am very glad you have come."

At first the conversation turned to general topics—the weather, the prospects for the harvest. The best method for sowing wheat was discussed, and Hull rather surprised Stalin by saying that in Tennessee, where he was from, the grains were planted to a depth of over ten inches. The subject of building rafts came up. Hull said that in Tennessee huge logs were used, and Stalin recalled that in Georgia logs were held together with grapevines. Hull then began to give his impressions of Moscow, saying he was greatly pleased to be in the Soviet capital and to fulfil his long-cherished dream of visiting the Soviet Union. He added that he had attended many international conferences, but had never before been shown such hospitality and consideration.

"I had not expected to hear so much praise from you," Stalin answered with a smile. "Well, shall we get down to business?"

Hull agreed, and said that in his opinion one of the most important functions of the present conference would be to prepare for a meeting between Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill. Such a meeting, he added, would be welcomed by the American people and the peoples of all countries taking part in the war against fascism. Hull then gave Stalin a message from Roosevelt concerning the site for a meeting.

After reading the Russian text of the message, Stalin handed it to Molotov and remarked that before he could reply he would have to give the matter some thought and consult with his colleagues. Molotov, too, looked over the message, and said that at present, when major military operations were going on at the front, it was the unanimous opinion of all high-ranking civilian and military members of the Soviet government that Stalin should not leave the country at all. At any rate, he could only travel to a place where it was certain that daily contact could be made with Moscow.

Stalin nodded in agreement, and said that in view of all this perhaps the meeting of the Big Three ought to be postponed a little—at least until the following spring. He thought Fairbanks, Alaska, might be a suitable place at that time.

Hull objected that both the President and he were firmly convinced the most appropriate time for such a meeting would be the present. The international situation called for it. If such a meeting did not occur, there would be profound disappointment among all the Allied peoples. The effect of the meeting would be to unify the three great powers, which would further their cooperation in the war effort and the development of their relations in the post-war period.

Hull went on to say that if the powers waited until the end of the war to formulate a basic foundation for a post-war international program, peoples in all the democracies would go their separate ways. Their disagreements would become more serious, and various elements, groups, and individuals would take advantage of this. Under such circumstances it would be very difficult—for the United States, at least—to pursue a suitable post-war program, and to rally and unite the forces needed to support it. The situation at the moment was entirely dif-

ferent: any official in the USA, however high his rank, would be immediately discredited and thrown out of office if he announced that he opposed working out a post-war program.

Hull added that although President Roosevelt and he considered such a meeting highly important they understood, of course, that the task of conducting the war must have first priority, and thus he was pleased to hear that Stalin would give the question careful study. He hoped an appropriate decision could be reached. In this connection, Hull stressed the importance he attached to the signing of a four-power declaration at the conclusion of the Moscow Conference.

Stalin said he would think this over. He saw the need for a meeting of the three leaders. The trouble was that at the time important military operations were being conducted by the Red Army; the summer campaign on the Soviet-German front was gradually developing into a winter campaign.

"Just now," Stalin added, "we have a very rare opportunity. For the first time in fifty years, perhaps, it is possible to deal the German armies a serious defeat. The reserves of the enemy are insignificant, while those of the Red Army would suffice for a whole year's operations. Obviously the Soviet Union cannot wage war against the Germans every ten years. This makes it extremely important to take advantage of the opportunities we have at present and to accomplish our task of getting rid of the German threat for a long period. As for the Big Three meeting, I will have to think about it and consult with my colleagues."

Hull replied that he understood the concern of the Soviet side, but at the same time hoped some way could be found for the three leaders to meet. He added that according to the information he had the governments and peoples of all the Allied countries were waiting impatiently for such a meeting, hoping that it would bring closer cooperation between the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the United States.

Stalin agreed, and noted that in principle he had nothing at all against such a meeting.

"But still," Hull countered, "the impression I am getting is that you, Mr. Chairman, are giving greater thought to immediate plans than to the more distant future, for which a meeting of the Big Three is of paramount importance."

Stalin replied that this was not due to stubbornness or concern for prestige, on his part. It was simply that he could not understand why the President could not come to a meeting place closer to Soviet territory—to Teheran, for instance. Why was it that a delay of two days in delivering important state documents to the American President was seen as a vitally important matter, while it was not understood that any false step in military operations was not just a grammatical error, which could easily be corrected later, but might cost tens of thousands of lives? This was the reason for his concern with maintaining reliable contact with Moscow.

Hull pointed out that if the meeting were held in Basra the Americans would vouch for the reliability of communications. Ambassador Harriman caught up this idea immediately, saying that the heads of state would enjoy complete security. Each could stay in his own camp in the hills back of Basra, guarded by troops of his own nationality.

"Thus complete protection will be assured," concluded Harriman.

To this Stalin said that it was not at all questions of protection and security that worried him, but rather the need for him to be as close as possible to the Soviet-German front.

The meeting lasted nearly an hour.

Everyone got up. Hull went around the table to where Stalin stood, shook his hand, and said in Russian:

"Until we meet again."

Stalin said in reply that he had been greatly pleased to meet the US Secretary of State.

Some Results of the Conference

The problems discussed at the Moscow Conference comprised not only bringing the war to a speedy conclusion and the related task of opening a second front, but also other questions, on which a significant degree of agreement was reached. The Four-Power Declaration, mentioned above, was one of the main results of the conference. Other problems considered included the German question, the situation in Italy, the fate of Austria, and the establishment of a European Advisory Commission.

During one of the recesses in the work of the conference,

when everyone was strolling in the garden that surrounded the house on Spiridonovka Street, Hull told Molotov that he would like to present separately to the British and the Soviet delegations certain thoughts concerning Germany. Hull explained that this was not an official proposal by the United States but simply an indication of the Americans' line of thought—general suggestions which could be talked over freely. If the Soviet side wished, Hull added, these ideas could also be discussed with Eden to get his point of view.

Molotov expressed interest and asked if he might be given the text of this proposal in order to study it more closely. Hull gave Molotov a copy of the document at once.

The next day, during another recess in the conference, Molotov told Hull the following as they were walking in the grounds:

"I showed your paper to Premier Stalin, and his reaction was on the whole favourable. In essence the proposal corresponds to Soviet ideas about the treatment of Germany once we have achieved victory. Thus we are willing to support this proposal as a foundation for further work on an appropriate document."

It should be said that there were other points in the document which the Soviet government did not support. In particular, a plan was presented for the partition of Germany. This plan was discussed, but the Soviet side treated it sceptically and stressed that the question required special study. The other points set forth in the American proposal followed from the demand that Germany surrender unconditionally. The German authorities or military representatives were to sign a document acknowledging that Nazi Germany had been utterly defeated and giving the victors the rights of occupying powers in all German territories. The German authorities would be obliged to give up all prisoners of war and other citizens of the United Nations who had been taken to Germany. The United Nations would be empowered to manage the demobilisation of the German armed forces, and to ensure the release of political prisoners, the closing of concentration camps, and the detention of war criminals. Bodies for economic control—and also their staffs—were to be properly maintained by the German authorities, and all documentation and equipment was to be

preserved for later transfer to the United Nations, which would be empowered to oversee the German economy.

It was further envisaged that the territory of Germany would be occupied by British, Soviet, and American troops. Nazi officials were to be removed from office, and all traces of the fascist regime eradicated. The Nazi Party would be disbanded. Germany would be made to pay reparations for the material damage done to the Soviet Union and the other Allied powers, and also to occupied countries; the amount of these reparations was to be determined by a commission to be composed, at the start, of representatives of the three powers. Germany would be totally disarmed, and would no longer maintain a standing army or a general staff. As for the question of boundaries, it was thought this should be considered in the course of a general settlement of the German problem.

The discussion of this plan showed that on the whole agreement existed concerning Germany's status as an occupied country. Indeed, many of the suggestions advanced at the Moscow Conference were later incorporated in the framework of a document concerning these matters which was adopted by the powers in the anti-Hitler coalition.

It was at the suggestion of the Soviet side that the situation in Italy was discussed at the conference. By this time, it will be recalled, the British and Americans had cleared fascist troops out of a large part of the Apennine Peninsula. Italy surrendered in the summer of 1943, and the Mussolini régime had been overthrown, but the forces of reaction had not yet been completely crushed. It was from these very forces, in fact, that the American and British authorities were drawing their support.

Since the very first days of the occupation there had been serious criticism of the Western powers' activities both from democratic groups in Italy and from progressive public opinion in other countries. Thus it was natural that the Soviet delegation at the Moscow Conference should ask for detailed information about how the Allies were carrying out the agreement for armistice with Italy. The Soviet delegation suggested measures that would ensure the elimination of fascism in Italy and promote development along democratic lines.

These suggestions gave rise to heated discussion. Eden af-

firmed that the measures the Western Allies had been taking were aimed at democratisation. Hull supported his British colleague and promised that the two of them would compile and present to the conference a special document giving a detailed chronological list of all the measures the two governments had taken in Italy since the invasion of Sicily. Molotov argued that the three powers should nonetheless make a public statement on Italy that would also include the Soviet proposals. In the end this was agreed to and found expression in the Declaration adopted by the conference.

The Moscow Conference decided that an advisory council—made up of representatives of the USA, the USSR, Britain, the French Committee of National Liberation, Greece, and Yugoslavia—should be created to deal with questions involving Italy. The recommendations to be formulated by the council would be used to help coordinate Allied policy in Italy.

This decision undoubtedly had a positive effect. To a certain extent, it hindered the American and British military authorities in acting arbitrarily against the interests of the Italian working class and the country's democratic development.

During the discussion of Austria's fate after the war, the conference participants emphasised that Hitler's annexation of that country had been unlawful, and that the three powers did not consider themselves bound by the changes which had taken place in Austria since the Anschluss in 1938.

While the discussion of this question was in progress one of the technical secretaries of the Soviet delegation came in and handed a sheet of paper to Molotov, who after glancing at it tapped on the table with a pencil to get the attention of the others in the room.

"Gentlemen," he began, with a note of excitement in his voice. "Word has just been received that the Red Army has liberated Dnepropetrovsk. This victory was attained in the course of a broad autumn offensive now being pressed by our troops."

There was an outburst of applause, after which Hull and Eden offered their congratulations to the Soviet delegation. In the days that followed, Molotov was to announce to the conference several more major victories just won by the Red Army.

After a break, the draft of a Declaration on Austria was dis-

cussed and adopted. The conference also considered a number of questions relating to the post-war settlement in Europe. This question was of particular significance. The groups in power in the USA and Britain wanted to see federations of small and middle-sized countries established in Central and South-Eastern Europe. It is not hard to guess that the British and American imperialists would have used these federations as a means for attaining their own selfish ends; they wanted to recarve the map of Europe to suit themselves, without considering the wishes of the peoples inhabiting the countries of that region. The Soviet government took a negative attitude towards these plans, and refused to give its consent.

In the course of the discussion, the Soviet representative objected vigorously against the idea of creating such federations. Such plans, he declared, were reminiscent of the pre-war policy of a *cordon sanitaire*, which had been directed against the Soviet Union.

Eden hastened to offer assurances that his government had no intention of throwing up a *cordon sanitaire* around the Soviet Union. It was against Germany, he said, that Britain wanted to apply this measure.

Molotov set forth the Soviet point of view concerning post-war settlement in Europe. The Soviet government, he said, regarded the liberation of small countries and the restoration of their independence and sovereignty as one of the chief tasks to be accomplished in establishing a post-war European order and ensuring a lasting peace. The Soviet delegation pointed out the danger of prematurely and artificially putting small countries into groupings conceived without consulting the nations concerned, and declared that after the war the peoples of Europe must be free to decide their destinies without any outside interference or pressure whatever. The Soviet delegation also argued that attempts to federate small countries, if based on decisions by émigré governments that did not express the true will of their peoples, would in effect mean forcing such decisions on nations against their will. In conclusion, the Soviet representative stressed once more that all efforts to revive the policy of a *cordon sanitaire* employed against the Soviet Union—as was the underlying intent of the federations being proposed in the west—must be rejected categorically.

In taking a firm stand against foisting federations of small and middle-sized European states in advance, the Soviet government acted in the interests of security for the USSR and other states after the war, and in defence of the sovereign right of the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe to decide their own destinies. But Western politicians, especially Churchill, nonetheless kept trying to force through the idea of "federating" various European countries—for example, of creating a so-called Balkan federation.

The decision of the Moscow Conference to establish a European Advisory Commission, with permanent headquarters in London, was of great significance for the future of relations between the Allied powers. It may be regarded as concrete proof that the three powers meant to work together in dealing with the main post-war problems. The three governments would, when they thought it expedient, entrust the commission with studying questions that arose in connection with the cessation of hostilities in Europe and making joint recommendations on these questions to the three governments. In particular, the commission was to work out terms for the surrender of the enemy states.

Another important subject discussed at the Moscow Conference was the statement regarding Nazi responsibility for war crimes. The original draft of this document was elaborated by the Americans and personally approved by Roosevelt. A day or two after the conference opened, Hull submitted the draft to the British and Soviet delegations, asking them to look it over and make additions if needed. Hull said that the American side thought the declaration should be signed by the heads of government of the three powers, and expressed the desire to see it made public while the conference was still in session. Molotov and Eden promised to examine the draft declaration soon.

The text of the draft was later discussed in some detail. Alterations and additions were made, and it was then sent to the leaders of the three powers of the anti-Hitler coalition for their final approval. This took time, and in the end the declaration was published only on November 2, 1943, after the Moscow Conference had ended.

It should be noted that during the preliminary discussion of

the declaration at the conference Eden had much to say about the need to establish "judicial forms" for a "legal" handling of war criminals' cases. Hull's attitude was more decisive. He said that since there was no doubt that war crimes had been committed a judicial procedure would only cause delays; persons guilty of crimes should be punished at once. The Soviet delegation took the same position. This controversy was, however, pointless: the text of the statement called for punishment of those guilty under the laws of the countries where their crimes were committed. The statement regarding atrocities of the Nazis established a number of the fundamental principles used in setting up the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg.

Later on a number of Western politicians, and particularly Churchill, tried to take the Nazi criminals under their protection. This was a clear demonstration of duplicity on Churchill's part: it was he himself who had said the Allies would pursue the guilty men to "the uttermost ends of the earth", and his words were incorporated into the statement.

Several technical and military questions were also discussed at the Moscow Conference in connection with Major General Deane's report containing a number of concrete suggestions. One of these was that the Soviet Union make bases available to British and American bombers for the conduct of "shuttle" operations against German industrial areas. This was in fact done later; the Soviet side made bases in the neighborhood of Poltava available for such operations. Another suggestion had to do with ensuring a more effective exchange of information about weather. This ultimately led to a significant broadening of such exchanges. A third suggestion was that air communication between the USSR and the USA be improved. Hull had a separate discussion of this matter with Molotov, and the Soviet side agreed to an increase in air traffic. The appropriate Soviet bodies were instructed to study this question.

During the conference there was an exchange of opinions on the desirability of Turkey's entry into the war on the Allied side, and on cooperation with Sweden. The Soviet delegation maintained that if Turkey joined the anti-Hitler coalition this would help shorten the war. The participants discussed various ways of getting Turkey to declare war on Nazi Germany as soon as possible. As for cooperation with Sweden, the confer-

ence discussed the possibility that Allied planes flying in the north might be permitted to land at bases in that country. After some discussion it was decided that the three powers should continue to study these questions.

Several general principles were established with regard to reparations. These should be exacted from Germany in such a way as to help strengthen the post-war world economy. This meant payment in goods and services rather than in money. Reparations should be apportioned among the victims of Nazi aggression in accordance with their losses, and limited to a defined period. It was agreed that a three-power commission on German reparations should be created; representatives of other interested states could be included later.

At one of the sessions, Hull raised the question of a declaration by the United Nations with regard to dependent countries and the population of colonial and mandated territories. A draft of such a document had been prepared by the State Department, and Hull said he had given it to Eden in March of 1943, at the time of his last visit to the United States.

Hull declared that he only wanted to acquaint the conference participants with Washington's position on this problem. Since there would be no time to examine the proposals in detail, he understood that no decision could be reached just then. Eden said he was not prepared to discuss this question, and added that his government did not agree with the point of view expressed in the document. Molotov emphasised that the Soviet government attached great importance to the question of dependent countries, and believed the matter merited further study. At bottom, the US proposal reflected its desire to lay hand on certain regions controlled by European colonial nations. And naturally the British were not pleased by the idea of discussing the fate of colonies and mandated territories.

Dinner in the Kremlin

On the evening of October 30, Stalin gave a dinner in the Catherine Hall in the Kremlin on the occasion of the conclusion of the Moscow Conference of foreign ministers. There were a great many guests. Among those invited were the par-

ticipants in the conference, members of the Political Bureau and the State Committee for Defense, and various ministers. The uniforms of high-ranking generals shone with gold and medals.

The overall mood was one of elation. By this time it was clear that the tide of the war had turned in favour of the anti-Hitler coalition. Already there had been many triumphs in battle, brilliant operations by the Red Army command, and decisive victories for Soviet arms. Hitler's forces had suffered a crushing defeat at Stalingrad, and then all along the Southern Front. The Soviet Union had won the hard-fought battle of the Kursk salient. The Red Army had crossed the Dnieper and was continuing its rapid advance to the west. Anglo-American forces were mounting an offensive in Italy that had, in essence, taken Nazi Germany's most important ally out of the war.

Particularly prominent among the military men present in the Catherine Hall were several representatives of the brilliant pleiad of young and talented Soviet commanders who had demonstrated the superiority of the USSR's strategy and tactics over those of Nazi Germany. Their names were being repeated again and again in the orders of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, and salutes in honour of their troops resounded in Moscow. It was a pleasure simply to look at these officers: energetic, resolute, trim and smart in their full-dress uniforms. They seemed to personify the flower of the Red Army marching unswervingly towards victory.

The largest table stretched along a wall covered in greenish moiré wallpaper. At its center sat Stalin, with Hull on his right and Harriman on his left. I was seated at Hull's right, and acted as interpreter. Opposite us, in the same order, sat Molotov, Eden, and Archibald Clark Kerr, the British ambassador, together with Pavlov, who translated for them. The places to either side were occupied by members of the Political Bureau and the leaders of the British and American military missions. At the other tables Soviet ministers, marshals, generals, and high-ranking officials of the Council of People's Commissars, the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, and the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade sat intermingled with other guests—members of the US and British delegations to the Moscow Conference, diplomats, and Soviet and foreign journalists.

As soon as everyone was seated, Stalin got to his feet, glass

in hand. Molotov tapped his knife against the bottle standing in front of him to get everyone's attention. There were no microphones on the table, and Stalin spoke quietly, but the silence that immediately descended on the room was so complete that his every word could be heard, even in the farthest corner.

Stalin congratulated the participants in the conference on the successful completion of their work. He expressed confidence that the decisions just adopted would help bring to a speedy end the war against Nazi Germany and its satellites in Europe.

"From this time forth," Stalin continued, "there will be even closer cooperation among the three great powers, and the atmosphere of confidence in which the work of the conference was conducted will be preserved as the anti-Hitler coalition takes further steps together in the name of victory over our common enemy. As for the Soviet Union, I can assure you that it will fulfill its obligations honourably. To our victory, my friends!"

Stalin raised his glass high, looked cheerfully around the room, clinked glasses with Hull, and nodded cordially towards Eden. Everyone rose to join in drinking the toast proposed.

Cordell Hull asked to speak next. He conveyed greetings from President Roosevelt to all present, and said his government would do everything possible for the successful implementation of the decisions agreed on at the Moscow Conference. In conclusion he, too, expressed confidence that the enemy would be defeated by the concerted efforts of the united peoples. Afterwards Eden, Molotov, ambassadors Harriman and Kerr, and the heads of the British and American military missions also spoke.

In the intervals between toasts, Stalin and Hull kept up an animated conversation, and it was my job to translate for them. When Ambassador Harriman joined the conversation, Bohlen provided the translation.

The conversation between Stalin and Hull revolved around the work of the conference and the situation on the fronts. Hull spoke of the difficulties the Anglo-American forces were encountering in Northern Italy and about the Germans' stubborn resistance. Stalin, in turn, briefly explained how things stood on the Soviet-German front. He said that before long major operations would be conducted in the Ukraine, and that probably Kiev would be liberated soon. Hull listened with great

interest, and said he would inform President Roosevelt right away about the Red Army's plans.

Hull then took the initiative in the conversation. He apparently decided that the opportunity presented by sitting next to Stalin must not be allowed to slip by. What was more, he was leaving for home the next morning and saw this as his last chance to talk over the various questions that interested his government with the head of the Soviet government. He began with the problem of relations between the two countries after the war. Hull remarked, as if making his own reply to Stalin's initial toast:

"I must credit the success of the Moscow Conference first of all to you, Marshal Stalin. This success is due to the decisive step that your country and your people have taken towards participating, together with Great Britain and the United States, in a world-wide program for the future based on cooperation."

Stalin smiled, and replied that he was entirely in favour of a broad program for international cooperation—military, political, and economic—in the interests of peace.

"It is very important," Hull continued, "that you realise the great value of personal contact among national leaders, and, above all of personal contacts between you, President Roosevelt, and Prime Minister Churchill. Don't you think that such a meeting might take place in Basra?"

Stalin replied firmly that after long consideration he had come to the conclusion that for the present it would be impossible for him to undertake such a long trip. As things stood, he doubted whether he would be able to leave the country at all. The American government must believe that he was speaking in complete sincerity. Stalin said that he could send Molotov, his first deputy, in place of himself. Under Soviet law Molotov had the right, when Stalin was absent, to act in his stead.

"What do you think of the idea?" Stalin asked.

Hull answered that if Marshal Stalin could not come to such a meeting himself Molotov would, of course, make a worthy representative both of him personally and of the Soviet government. Still, in Hull's opinion, the main thing was that Stalin and Roosevelt meet personally.

A brief silence followed; each man was busy with his own thoughts. Hull fidgeted about with his fork, obviously disappointed that his eloquence had failed once again.

Then I noticed that Stalin was leaning towards me behind Hull's back, beckoning with his finger. I bent closer, and he said in a barely audible voice:

"Listen carefully. Translate this to Hull word for word: The Soviet government has analysed the situation in the Far East and decided that as soon as the Allies have defeated Nazi Germany and the war in Europe is over it will enter the war against Japan. Hull can tell Roosevelt that this is our official position, but for the time being we want it kept secret. Speak to him quietly, so that no one else will hear you. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Comrade Stalin," I answered in a whisper.

While I translated Stalin's words, trying to render them into English as exactly as possible, Stalin looked straight into Hull's eyes and nodded from time to time in confirmation.

It was clear that Hull was greatly excited by what he had heard. The Americans had long awaited this moment. Now the US government had received from the head of the Soviet government an official—although, of course, strictly confidential—declaration on this question, which was of such importance to Washington.

Stalin announced this decision to a wider audience a month later at the Teheran Conference of the Big Three, and repeated his commitment at the Yalta Conference in February of 1945. But it was at the dinner in the Kremlin on October 30, 1943, that he first spoke of the Soviet Union's decision to enter the war against Japan once Germany had been defeated. The news simply transfigured Hull. Not a trace of his gloom remained. Writing about this evening later, Hull said he had been greatly surprised and pleased by this statement, which Stalin had made entirely of his own will.

Hull records in his memoirs that he dropped in at Spaso House at dawn on his way to Central Airport to compose a telegram to President Roosevelt. He took the precaution, of dividing the message into two parts, the first of which was sent in the Navy's code, the second in the Army's—the Amer-

icans feared that one of the codes had been cracked by enemy counter-intelligence.

At the same time Hull also sent another telegram, in which he discussed the prospects for a meeting of Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt. Hull informed the President that Stalin had firmly decided against going to Basra, and advised Roosevelt to think again about Teheran as a site, since this was the only chance left that a meeting could be agreed on.

Hull's telegram evidently did its work. Soon afterwards, President Roosevelt agreed to a meeting in the Iranian capital.

It was only with some difficulty that Hull contained his emotion after hearing Stalin's statement at the dinner table in the Catherine Hall. Rosy spots appeared on the parchment-coloured skin of his lean face, bespeaking profound emotion.

"Tell Marshal Stalin," he said, turning to me and speaking in a low voice, "that the United States government is sincerely grateful for this news. I personally appreciate highly the trust shown in me. Please be assured that we will keep this important decision strictly secret. I will, of course, inform President Roosevelt at once. The American people will always remember with gratitude the Soviet Union's willingness to help them in this hard struggle. Knowing full well what immense efforts the Red Army is making in the name of Allied victory in Europe, we appreciate this willingness all the more. Once again, my thanks to you, Marshal Stalin, and to all the colleagues who stand behind you."

Stalin nodded in reply, but said nothing.

The conversation then shifted to the pre-war policies of the Western powers, and in particular of the American government. Stalin pointed out that isolationism had nearly brought the United States to grief, and could have done serious harm to the Soviet Union. He then began to speak of the need for collaboration by the United States and the Soviet Union.

Hull agreed, saying that collaboration was an excellent idea and that the Soviet and American peoples were much alike and had a great deal in common.

"Each of them," Hull said, "is a great nation, and thus it is important to assure that understanding, trust, and friendship develop between them on the basis of a cooperative spirit."

Stalin later set aside the decanter and poured out Khvanchkara, a sweetish Georgian wine, for himself and Hull. Most of the other guests, however, gave clear preference to vodka and cognac. General Deane of the United States got Stalin's attention and proposed a toast to the day when the armed forces of the United States and Great Britain met the armed forces of the Soviet Union in Germany. Stalin rose from his place, went round the table to Deane, clinked glasses with him, and clapped him approvingly on the shoulder.

As the dinner continued, Stalin proposed toasts to the military leaders present, the members of the general staff, and the different branches of the service. On each occasion, after making a short speech, he would leave his place at the table, walk over to the marshal or general he had named, and clink glasses with him, touching the shoulder of the man being toasted with his left hand. Sometimes he would pause along his way to exchange greetings with British or American guests. I followed behind to translate during these brief conversations.

This continued until shortly after midnight, when coffee was served in the adjacent room. Stalin, Molotov, Hull, Eden, and the interpreters were seated around a separate table.

Stalin refuted in sarcastic tones the rumours circulating in several countries that the Soviet Union might make a separate peace with Nazi Germany. Hull said that everyone who knew the Soviet people and the history of their relations with Nazi Germany even a little was certain they would never conclude a separate peace. Eden, however, kept glumly silent.

Stalin, glancing briefly at the British Foreign Secretary, said that he was pleased by Hull's confidence and repeated that the spreading of such rumours was the height of stupidity.

I think Stalin had deliberately chosen this moment to mention the rumours about separate negotiations with Nazi Germany. At this time there were new indications of contacts between Hitler's emissaries and representatives of Britain and the USA in a number of neutral countries. In particular, Allen Dulles, the head of the American Intelligence Service in Switzerland, was conducting lively negotiations in Geneva with Nazi agents. In speaking of such rumours, Stalin probably wanted to feel Hull and Eden out, and possibly to get a definite statement from them on the matter. But they pretended not to have

understood the hint, and neither of them pursued the subject any further.

Afterwards everyone went along to the screening room for a showing of *The Days at Volochaevka*, a Soviet film, released in 1938, about the liberation of Siberia and the Pacific coast from the Japanese interventionists. It had enjoyed great popularity, and drawn protests from the Japanese ambassador in Moscow at the time. Stalin had chosen this film not by chance, of course. Its contents reinforced, as it were, what he had just told the U.S. Secretary of State about the Soviet Union's willingness to join the struggle against Japan once Nazi Germany was defeated.

The film showing was for members of the Political Bureau, the heads of the British and American delegations, and the ambassadors of the USA and Britain. The screening room was not large. The screen was in a deep niche, and there was a fairly wide space between it and the first row of chairs to allow for comfortable viewing. To the right of the screen stood a grand piano. Stalin, Hull, the interpreters, Eden, and Molotov occupied the first row; the other guests sat in the second row.

A short concert preceded the screening. Kozlovsky's marvelous tenor and Barsova's trills were a pleasure to hear, but Mikhailov's bass seemed too powerful for the small room. The film began right after the concert. The atrocities the Japanese committed on Soviet soil and the heroic struggle of the partisans of Siberia and the Far East made a deep impression on Hull. During the film Stalin turned several times to Hull to comment on various episodes and to reminisce about the time of the Soviet people's fight against the Japanese occupying forces. After one episode, Hull leaned over to Stalin and said with emotion:

"Now I see, Marshal Stalin, that you have accounts to settle with the Japanese, which you will undoubtedly present in good time. I understand you, and am confident of your success."

He held out his thin, old man's hand to Stalin, who shook it and said calmly:

"Yes, you're right. We have not forgotten about what the Japanese militarists did in our country."

When the screening was over Hull shook Stalin's hand again

and again and thanked him profusely for the opportunity to see an interesting and very instructive historical film.

Stalin accompanied the Secretary of State to the broad marble staircase leading down into the vestibule of the Grand Kremlin Palace. They stood for a while at its head, exchanging good wishes for the future. Stalin shook Hull's hand twice in order to emphasise his satisfaction with their meeting.

The Road to Victory and Peace

Just before its conclusion, the conference approved a joint communique that was published simultaneously in Moscow, Washington, and London on November 2, 1943, together with the conference documents discussed above.

The communique said that "The Conference of Foreign Secretaries of the United States of America, Mr. Cordell Hull; of the United Kingdom, Mr. Anthony Eden; and of the Soviet Union, Mr. V. M. Molotov, took place at Moscow from the 19th to 30th of October 1943. There were twelve meetings."¹ There followed a list of the other members of the American, British, and Soviet delegations. The agenda, it was stated, had included "all the questions submitted for discussion by the three governments."

"The Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union," the Communique said, "have been in close cooperation in all matters concerning common war effort, but this is the first time that the Foreign Secretaries of the three governments have been able to meet together in conference.

"In the first place there were frank and exhaustive discussions of measures to be taken to shorten the war against Germany and her satellites in Europe. Advantage was taken of the presence of military advisers, representing the respective Chiefs of Staff, in order to discuss definite military operations, with regard to which decisions had been taken and which are already being prepared, and in order to create a basis for the closest military cooperation in the future between the three countries.

¹ *Documents on American Foreign Relations*, Vol. VI, World Peace Foundation, Boston, 1945, pp. 227-29.

"Second only to the importance of hastening the end of the war was the unanimous recognition by the three Governments that it was essential in their own national interests and in the interest of all peace-loving nations to continue the present close collaboration and cooperation in the conduct of the war into the period following the end of hostilities, and that only in this way could peace be maintained."

In conclusion the Communique said that in the atmosphere of mutual confidence and understanding "consideration was also given to the other important questions. These included not only questions of a current nature, but also questions concerning the treatment of Hitlerite Germany and its satellites, economic cooperation and the assurance of general peace."¹

The American and British delegations left Moscow early on the morning of November 1. The day was damp and cloudy. Central Airport flew the flags of the three powers, and an honour guard was on hand. Cordell Hull and his delegation were the first to depart. Stepping before the cameras and microphones of the Soviet newsreels, the Secretary of State declared:

"I want to say a few words of farewell to the officials and the people of the Soviet Union. No words can express my gratitude for the remarkable hospitality and good will and friendship which the officials and the people of this country have shown me and my colleagues throughout our stay here. This international conference testifies to the great possibilities of our broad plans for the future, and to their practicability. I am certain that the results of this conference will become clearer with the passing of time, as it becomes possible to follow through on what has been decided here. Once again, I want to thank all those who have helped make our stay comfortable and successful."

In reading the documents issued by the conference and the public statements of its participants, it must be remembered that they come from a time when a bitter fight was going on against a crafty enemy who scrutinised such documents in an effort to find any hint of disagreement among the Allies that could be used in his own ends. Thus it is natural that the communiqués

¹ *Documents on American Foreign Relations*, Vol. VI, World Peace Foundation, Boston, 1945, pp. 227-29.

and other public statements of this period were so composed that no shade of conflict could be discovered in them. The question of a second front and related controversies occupied a special place, of course, and in fact no great secret was made of this. It goes without saying, however, that there were still other serious differences between the USSR and its Allies from the capitalist world, and that these manifested themselves at the Moscow Conference.

At the same time, the conference showed it was possible to reach joint decisions on complex problems involving both the conduct of the war and the post-war settlement. In addition to adopting a number of important decisions, the Moscow Conference paved the way for the first meeting of the Big Three, which took place in Teheran from November 28 through December 1, 1943.

The results of the Moscow Conference were met with great approval of the democratic public. There can, of course, be no doubt that these results, and the whole political atmosphere that prevailed at the conference, were made possible by the brilliant victories of Soviet arms on the fronts of the Great Patriotic War.

THE TEHERAN CONFERENCE

Journey to the Iranian Capital

The Meeting of "the Three"

The conference of the leaders of the three great powers that formed the anti-Hitler coalition, which took place in Teheran in the autumn of 1943, was an important milestone in the diplomatic history of World War II.

All three of the main participants of the Teheran meeting have long since died. The last to do so, Winston Churchill, who lived to the age of ninety, was given an honourable burial at his ancestral estate in England in 1965. He had retired from state affairs more than ten years previously. Roosevelt died in April 1945, virtually on the eve of Germany's capitulation. Stalin outlived him by a little under eight years. But at the time of the Teheran Conference all three were the leaders of the countries which made up the anti-Hitler coalition. In the agonies of an unprecedented war, the world carefully followed their every step and hung on their every word. Naturally, the eyes of all humanity were fixed on the Teheran Conference. It was not merely the peoples of an enslaved Europe that awaited the decisions of the first meeting of "the Big Three". The results of the conference were just as eagerly awaited by the Axis powers. At that time, the fate of civilisation and the life of future generations depended to a great extent on the ability of the three leaders of the anti-Hitler coalition to act jointly.

In Teheran, on November 28, 1943, three men met for the first time, whose names have since gone down in history: Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill. It is hard to imagine three more dissimilar men.

Each of these three leaders had his own views on history and

the future of mankind, each had his own ideals and convictions. But despite this, they were brought together in Teheran by the necessity of fighting a common enemy, and they adopted significant decisions there.

Many historians regard Teheran as the acme of the anti-Hitler coalition, a view I consider quite justified. But the road to this peak was by no means easy. After Hitler's attack on the USSR, the ruling circles of Britain and the United States showed restraint, and were, at first, most unwilling to enter into military cooperation with the Soviet Union. Whereas the Soviet government was striving to establish allied relations with the Western powers as soon as possible, seeing this as a guarantee of success in the struggle against the fascist Axis, London and Washington only joined in combined action against the common enemy under the pressure of circumstances and delayed the fulfilment of their obligations in all sorts of ways.

After the Soviet Union joined the war, it became a truly anti-fascist war of liberation. The heroic struggle of the Red Army brought the hope of deliverance from the "brown plague" to people everywhere, and especially the peoples of Europe, suffering under the yoke of the fascist "new order". Even then it was widely realised that neither Britain nor the United States could defeat the Axis powers without the Soviet Union. What is more, at that time, the alliance with the Soviet Union was the only chance for Britain and the USA to maintain their political independence and national sovereignty.

By and large, the awareness of this fact pre-determined the Soviet-Anglo-American cooperation in the war, and the establishment of the anti-Hitler coalition.

It must, however, be remembered that the Western participants in this coalition were pursuing their own specific aims in the war. Without an understanding of these aims it is hard to comprehend the nature of the relations between the Allies, and the motives by which the leaders of Britain and the United States were guided in a number of circumstances, including at the Teheran Conference.

The duplicity of Anglo-American policy was obvious. On the one hand, Britain and the USA were trying by the Soviet Union's efforts to weaken their major rivals, Germany and Japan, and on the other, maintaining the hope that Nazi Germany, with the

aid of Japan, would possibly manage to strangle the Soviet state, thus opening the way for the restoration of the undivided rule of capitalism throughout the world.

Naturally, at the height of the war, the leaders of Britain and the United States did not dare openly express their innermost aspirations. For, at that time, public opinion in those countries firmly supported active cooperation with the Soviet Union. The British and American governments could not ignore the wide movement of their peoples for an effective military alliance with the USSR and for determined joint action against the common enemy.

The anti-fascist coalition formed during the war played a historical role in the defeat of Hitler's Germany and militarist Japan. It was also a practical confirmation of Lenin's idea of the possibility of coexistence and even cooperation between states with different social and economic systems. The participation in this coalition of the USSR, which consistently pursued a policy of peace, and championed the friendship among the peoples and their right to decide their own destinies themselves, gave new strength to those fighting for freedom and independence. The decisions taken at Teheran confirmed very forcefully the significance of the anti-Hitler coalition.

Correspondence between Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill on the possibility of a meeting was carried on over a prolonged period. All three acknowledged the necessity and importance of a personal meeting. By that time, that is, by the autumn of 1943, a marked change had become noticeable in favour of the Allies in the war against Nazi Germany. Therefore it was no longer merely military considerations, but political ones as well that dictated the urgent need for a meeting of the three leaders of the anti-Hitler coalition. The nature of future joint action to accelerate the victory over the common enemy had to be discussed and agreed upon, and opinions exchanged regarding post-war settlement.

The question of where to hold the conference presented serious problems. Stalin preferred to hold it nearer to Soviet territory. He pointed out that the active military operations on the Soviet-German front did not permit him, as the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, to be absent from Moscow for any great length of time. This was, of course, a weighty argument. In his turn,

Roosevelt referred to the American Constitution which also did not allow him to be away from Washington for long.

In the autumn of 1943 when preparations were under way for the Moscow Conference of the Foreign Ministers of the Soviet Union, Britain and the USA, the question of a possible meeting of heads of government was discussed in the correspondence between Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill. In principle, agreement was reached to hold such a meeting between November 15 and December 15, 1943. But the venue, as I mentioned above, caused serious disagreement.

On my return to Moscow at the end of November from a brief business trip I found out that the controversial issue of the venue of the meeting of "the Big Three" had been resolved and that the Soviet delegation had already left Moscow by train on its way to Teheran.

From Moscow to Baku

At that time I was a counsellor concerned with Soviet-American relations in the Secretariat of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. Because of my fluent command of the English language, I had been entrusted with the task of interpreter at the Teheran Conference. In order to catch up with our delegation, I had to travel by plane. All the exit documents were ready and I flew out of Moscow on the night of November 26. Professor A. F. Miller, an expert in Middle Eastern affairs, flew with me, also to catch up with the delegation.

A snow-storm was raging on the highway leading to the airport. It was a pitch-dark night and the large, clumsy ZIS-101 car crept slowly forward. The headlights had been covered with black cloth, in accordance with the strict blackout regulations. A feeble light penetrating through the narrow slits lit up a small section of the road. The chauffeur pressed up close to the windscreen, was carefully keeping his eyes on the side of the road trying to steer clear of the ditch. Occasionally he had to stop the car, get out and wipe the snow off the windscreen.

It was impossible to make out in the dark how far we were from the airport. But then the car carefully turned off the highway to the right, then to the left, and the grey block of the blacked-out building of Vnukovo Airport came into view from

behind a large snow-drift. By the time the car stopped at the entrance, there were only fifteen minutes left till departure.

Inside the airport building it was bright, noisy and busy, despite the late hour. Having registered, we went out on the airfield. The Douglas cargo plane was already revving up its engines, and its propellers were swirling round snow-flakes which pricked our faces like needles. We made our way inside via a metal step-ladder. Half the cabin was piled up with boxes of some sort and only up front was a little more roomy. The collapsible metal bench rivetted to the frame was covered with hoarfrost. It was cold to sit as our backs leaned against the frozen metal frame. The heating was switched on after take-off but that was hardly of any avail: the hot air passed above, making our heads too hot, while our feet remained cold.

As usual during the war, we flew low, over the very tops of the trees, in an attempt to avoid Nazi fighter planes. The light in the cabin was not switched on, and out of the windows one could see snow-covered fields and dark copses. Just before morning, we touched down at an airport in the steppes. The tanks were refuelled and we set off again. Salt-marshes soon appeared below and there was hardly any snow now. Sand dunes and patches of dry grass stretched on monotonously. Towards midday the crew commander came through and said:

"In a few minutes we will be passing over Stalingrad. We are flying low and you will be able to see what has remained of the city."

We pressed up to the windows in silence. First individual houses scattered in the snow came into view, and then a kind of unbelievable chaos began: lumps of walls, boxes of half-ruined buildings, piles of rubble, isolated chimneys. All this rose in black-and-white zigzags above the snowy desert. It was not yet a year since the storm of war had raged here, leaving dead ruins behind it, and yet one could already make out the first signs of life. Visible against the snow were the black figures of people and every now and then there was evidence of new buildings. The city was being reborn and the pulse of life had started up again. Then the outskirts of Stalingrad disappeared and once again a gloomy, lifeless landscape stretched out below us. Occasionally we spotted the rusty skeletons of Nazi tanks and cars. I turned away from the window, pulled up the collar of my coat and,

tucking my feet underneath me in the vain hope of keeping warm, I dozed.

We arrived in Baku in the late evening. It was warm. We were met at the airport by a diplomatic agent of the Ministry of foreign affairs in Azerbaijan, and representatives of the local authorities. We travelled to town in the diplomatic agent's old, dark-blue Chevrolet. The narrow road ran through a forest of oil-derricks and the air was heavy with the rather comforting smell of crude oil. It gave one a feeling of calm, satisfaction and even serenity. But we all knew that the people of Baku worked round the clock in order to provide the fuel that the country needed so badly. They coped with their task with honour. During the hardest days of the war, when the Nazis had reached the Volga and the foothills of the Caucasus, Baku oil supplied the needs both of the rear and the front without interruption.

We were put up in the Hotel Baku in a room with all modern conveniences and, most pleasant of all, hot water. During the early period of the war in Moscow even the Ministry of foreign affairs building was not heated. We used to work in our coats, and spend the night in the basement of the Ministry building on Kuznetski Most, which served as an air-raid shelter. It was awfully cold there, and we used to scrape the hoar-frost off the brick walls before going to sleep.

International Airline Passengers

At dawn we set off through the forest of oil derricks to the aerodrome. Everything promised a fine day. The bright colours of a cloudless sky were already shining in the east. Waiting for us was a plane of perhaps the only Soviet international airline at the time, Baku-Teheran. It was served by double-engine planes with excellently equipped interiors. Inside the sound-proof salon were two rows of soft, comfortable seats with high backs and snow-white covers stretched over the head-rests. The crew consisted of military pilots dressed in officers' uniform with shining golden shoulder-straps. They seemed particularly smart in comparison with the Moscow officers who wore green field shoulder-straps with barely visible badges of rank.

The elegant interior of the plane, the smartly dressed crew and the rays of the sun, streaming softly through the windows all

combined to create a festive mood. Soon after the plane had taken off, one of the crew members came into the salon (besides Miller and me there were four officers). Fulfilling the role of stewardess, he informed us at what altitude and what speed we were flying, what the temperature was outside and of our expected time of arrival in Teheran. A little later he came through again, carrying a tray with six little cups of black coffee. After the previous day in the ice-covered, freezing plane, all this was like a dream.

At first we flew along the shore of the Caspian Sea, then over the brown terrain of Iranian Azerbaijan: we passed Tabriz surrounded by scattered little mud-houses. By noon we reached Teheran, which looked very beautiful from a bird's-eye view. The regular squares of the city blocks, the large green expanses and the avenues trimmed with trees at the edges, made a picture quite unlike my idea of the eastern town. From the air, it seemed, to have a totally European look. However, the minarets of the mosques clearly reminded us which part of the world we were in. A mountain range was visible to the left of the city which lay in a valley. In the hills were the Shah's country residence and villas belonging to the local aristocracy.

Coming out of the plane at Teheran airport, we suddenly found ourselves in the height of summer, as it were. The trees with their lush foliage looked odd after snowy Moscow. We had to take off our coats and jackets and undid our shirt collars.

From the airport we were taken in a military jeep along dusty streets that looked far less attractive than from a bird's-eye view. True, the centre of town looked more modern. Finally the jeep entered the grounds of the Soviet embassy. I was later told that this estate had previously belonged to a rich Persian magnate. Left over from that time was a vast shady park with huge cedars, picturesque willows reflected in ponds and powerful plane trees with an irrigation ditch burbling refreshingly at the knotted roots.

Warning from the Rovno Forests

It would, perhaps, have been hard to find a more suitable place for the secret negotiation of the three wartime leaders than the Soviet embassy estate in Teheran. There was nothing

here to interfere with their work; the noises of the eastern city could not be heard. The vast estate was surrounded by a stone wall. There were several light-brick buildings in the green park in which the Soviet delegation was housed. The main house, which usually contained the embassy offices, was equipped as a residence for the President of the United States, Roosevelt.

The question of the American President residing in the Soviet embassy during the Conference had been discussed beforehand by the participants in the Teheran meeting. In the end this decision was taken for security reasons. The American diplomatic mission in Teheran was situated on the outskirts of the city, whereas the Soviet and British embassies literally adjoined each other. It was enough to place a high fence partitioning off the street and to create a temporary passageway between the two estates, in order to make them form one complex. In this way the security of the Soviet and British delegates was ensured, since the whole territory was reliably guarded. If Roosevelt had stayed at the American mission, then he and the other participants in the meeting would have had to travel to negotiations several times a day through the narrow streets of Teheran, where agents of the Third Reich could easily hide among the crowd.

Nazi intelligence was planning an attempt on the life of the participants in the Teheran meeting. In 1966, the well-known assassin, Otto Skorzeni, whom Hitler entrusted with most important acts of subversion, confirmed that he had been instructed to kidnap Roosevelt in Teheran. This operation was planned by the Nazis in great secrecy.

Hitler started to hatch the idea of assassinating the leaders of the three countries of the anti-fascist coalition immediately following the meeting in Casablanca in 1943 of President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill. Hitler entrusted the preparation of this operation, called "Long Jump", to Canaris, head of military intelligence, and to Kaltenbrunner, chief of the Reich's Central Security Department.

For the purposes of greater secrecy, the preparations for the assassination of "the Big Three" were carried out in special military intelligence and SS schools under the code name Operation Elephant. Nazi intelligence knew that Teheran was a possible meeting place for the leaders of the three great powers back in mid-September, 1943, having broken the American naval code.

Some time earlier, the leaders in Berlin had remembered, in connection with another matter, a certain man, Roman Gamota, who had experience with spying activities in Iran. It was decided to send him back there to organise subversion and to study the situation on the spot. In a personal letter to Hitler of May 22, 1943, Himmler wrote: "Although the enemies have put a high price on the head of Gamota and his life has been in danger more than once, after he recovers from malaria, he intends to return to Northern Iran." In August 1943, Roman Gamota was dropped from a plane not far from Teheran. He found shelter among local pro-Nazi elements and established a two-way radio link with Berlin. Later Gamota was joined by detachments of SS saboteurs. They also included agents of the Gestapo Winfred Oberg and Ulrich von Ortel. These detachments were dropped from German planes which took off from the Nazi-occupied Crimea. Gamota and his group were located by Ernst Merzer, a secret British spy in Teheran, of Swiss origin. Merzer had been "recommended" to the British Intelligence Service by the British intelligence agent and subsequently a famous novelist, Somerset Maugham. Later, while working for the Intelligence Service, Merzer enlisted in German military intelligence with the consent of his masters in London. Admiral Canaris investigated this new agent for a long time but never discovered that he was a double agent. At the end of 1940 Merzer was commissioned by German military intelligence to settle in Teheran as a representative of a number of West European commercial firms. When the Germans were forced to leave Iran in the summer of 1941, Ernst Merzer became the chief fixed-post spy and liaison agent of Nazi intelligence in Teheran. With the aid of a radio transmitter in Merzer's house, and underground radio link with saboteurs smuggled into Iran, Berlin kept up contact with its agents, in particular on questions linked with the preparations for an assassination of the leaders of the three great powers of the anti-Hitler coalition. Naturally, Merzer then passed all this on to his main bosses in Britain.

Few in Teheran at the time knew that vital information concerning the preparations for subversion against the leaders of the three powers had also been received from the distant Rovno forests, where a special group under the command of the experienced officers, Dmitry Medvedev and Alexander Lukin, was

active in the enemy rear. The group also included the famous intelligence officer Nikolai Kuznetsov, who carried out a number of daring operations in the area of the Nazi-occupied town of Rovno. With his perfect knowledge of German, Kuznetsov acted excellently in the guise of Oberleutnant of the German Wehrmacht, Paul Siebert. The Nazis did not suspect for a long time that behind the polished exterior of this tall and smart front-line officer was a Soviet agent. Finally, however, they did get on his trail and he and his two companions were killed on April 1, 1944.

Alexander Lukin reminisced how Nikolai Kuznetsov, that is Paul Siebert, won the favour of the SS Sturmbahnführer Ulrich von Ortel, who arrived in Rovno, and learned a vital secret out of him. It had all begun when von Ortel himself recommended Siebert to transfer to the SS, where it was easy to make a career. When Siebert and von Ortel met again in the officers' restaurant in Rovno, von Ortel reiterated the suggestion and promised in the future to introduce Siebert to Otto Skorzeni, with whom he, von Ortel, was to carry out a very important mission. It did not take long for Kuznetsov to find out what this was about. His tongue loosened by the whiff of brandy, von Ortel gave the whole game away.

"I'm going off to Iran soon, my friend," he whispered confidentially. "The 'Big Three' are meeting there at the end of November. We'll make in Abruzzo jump again! Only this time it will be a long jump! We're going to liquidate 'the Big Three' and change the course of the war. We'll make an attempt to kidnap Roosevelt so as to make it easier for the Führer to settle things with America. We'll fly in several groups. Personnel are being trained in a special school in Copenhagen."

By Abruzzo, von Ortel meant the operation to rescue Mussolini, which was carried out by Skorzeni on Hitler's instructions. After the fascist regime in Italy collapsed in July 1943, Mussolini was arrested and put under reinforced guard, in the alpine hotel Campo Imperatore, situated in an all but inaccessible locality near the little township of Abruzzo. The new Italian Prime Minister, Marshal Badoglio expressed his willingness to conduct negotiations with the British and the Americans about Italy's withdrawal from the war. This infuriated Hitler and he decided to kidnap Mussolini at whatever cost, so as to force the Italians,

with Mussolini's help, to continue resistance even if only in the north of the country. The only access to the Campo Imperatore hotel from below was by a cable way, the approaches to which were vigilantly guarded. The other way was from the air, and this was the option chosen by the Nazi secret service.

Hitler entrusted this operation to the SS Sturmbahnführer Otto Skorzeni. He already had several acts of sabotage and bloody operations to his name. The murder in 1934 of the Austrian Chancellor Dollfuss, the arrest during the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany of President Miklas and Chancellor Schuschnigg and savage reprisals against peaceful citizens of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union—were all the work of Skorzeni and his band.

Skorzeni enjoyed Hitler's especial favour and rapidly moved up the ladder of his career. By 1943 he was already the secret chief of the SS terrorists and saboteurs in the Sixth Section of the Reich's Central Security Department. He was also especially trusted by Ernst Kaltenbrunner, head of the SD and perpetrator of bloody crimes.

Hitler chose well when he entrusted Skorzeni with Operation Oak, the rescue of Mussolini. Despite all the complexities of the situation, Skorzeni achieved his objective. He and a group of 106 experienced saboteurs unexpectedly landed in gliders of a special design near the Hotel Campo Imperatore, disarmed the bewildered guards, freed the Duce and took him to Germany in a special Fieseler Storch plane. Goebbels used all he could from Operation Abruzzo for his propaganda. Skorzeni's name was sensationalised beyond belief, he was surrounded with a halo of mystic legend and extolled as an idol of the German race.

So it was no surprise that when the plan of sabotage against the participants in the Teheran Conference, code-named "Long Jump", was being worked out the choice fell once again on Skorzeni. But this time Hitler's favourite was unlucky.

Having found out about the planned sabotage from von Ortel, Kuznetsov hurried to Medvedev's detachment. A radio message was composed there which along with Kuznetsov's description of von Ortel immediately flew over the air to Moscow. This radio message confirmed similar information obtained by the Soviet intelligence service from other sources. Necessary measures were immediately taken to render the Nazi saboteurs harmless. But

all the same the utmost vigilance and carefulness had to be displayed so as to protect the participants in the Teheran meeting, in case the Nazis had any other versions to their sinister plan.

At that time the Iranian capital was swarming with refugees from war-torn Europe. In the main they were wealthy people seeking to escape discomfort and restrictions, but mainly the dangers of the war. They had managed to transfer a substantial amount of their capital to Teheran, and lived there in clover. One could see them round town in luxurious cars or in expensive restaurants and shops.

In the majority of countries participating in the war, not to mention the Nazi-occupied territories, people suffered all kinds of hardships, whereas in the countries not taking part in the war, people who possessed capital were able to acquire virtually anything they wished. In those poor years, the wealth and diversity of goods in the Teheran market were astounding. These goods reached Teheran from all corners of the world. The dealers asked fabulous prices. Although the war did not directly hit Iran, it led to very high inflation: the price of a bag of flour was greater than the average Iranian's annual income. But in Teheran at that time there were also many people who squandered money and enjoyed life.

Among the mass of refugees were also many Nazi agents. There were wide opportunities created for them in Iran, not only as a result of the peculiar circumstances, but also because of the patronage which the aged Reza Shah, an open sympathiser of Hitler, had shown the Germans in the pre-war years. The government of Reza Shah created an altogether favourable situation for German business men and entrepreneurs, which Nazi intelligence used to the full by implanting their spies in Iran. When the wave of refugees swept into Iran after the war started, the Gestapo used this opportunity to strengthen their secret service in the country which played the vital role as a trans-shipping point for Anglo-American supplies to the Soviet Union. It was not fortuitous that Reza Shah was forced to abdicate and withdraw to South Africa before conditions for friendly relations between Iran and the anti-Hitler coalition could be formed.

However, even after this, Nazi intelligence continued secret work in Iran, and this made the threat of all kinds of provocation very real indeed. The Nazis had taken steps in advance to

ensure that their secret intelligence service remained in Iran. This was headed, apart from the above-mentioned Roman Gamota, by experienced officers of the secret service. One of them, Schultze-Holthus, who occupied the post of German Consul General in Tabriz, was, in fact, an Abwehr agent. When the Iranian government decided to deport all representatives of Nazi Germany, Schultze-Holthus was not repatriated together with the other German diplomats. He went into hiding and lived illegally for several years.

Growing a beard and dyeing it with henna, he disguised himself as a mullah and roamed around the country recruiting agents from among the local reactionaries. In the summer of 1943, when Schultze-Holthus settled with the Kashkai tribes near Isfahan, a group of parachutists with radio transmitters were dropped down there, thus allowing him to establish a two-way radio contact with Berlin. The parachutists were from Otto Skorzen's special school. They brought with them a large number of weapons, explosives and gold ingots with which to pay the local agents.

Schultze-Holthus also maintained contact with a Gestapo fixed-post spy active in the Teheran area, a certain Mayr from the SD. Going underground at the same time as Schultze-Holthus, Mayr had hidden for three months in an Armenian graveyard in Teheran: he masqueraded as an Iranian farm-hand and worked as a grave-digger. Then, having set up a whole spy network, Mayr incited the nomad tribes of Iran to a rebellion against the central government and organised subversion and acts of sabotage. He kept up radio contact with Berlin, and not long before the Teheran Conference six parachutist saboteurs were dropped to him in the vicinity of the capital.

All these facts which have now become known show that Teheran was one of the centres of the Axis powers' spy network in the Middle East. When the necessity of taking serious measures of precaution for the security of "the Big Three" was being considered, representative of the American Secret Service, Michael Reilly shared the concern of the Soviet intelligence service. He pointed out in his turn that despite all precautions and measures already taken, there were still dozens of Nazi agents among the thousands of refugees which had swept into Teheran from Europe.

Inside the Soviet Embassy

At first Roosevelt declined the invitation to stay in the Soviet embassy. He explained that he would feel more independent if he were not somebody's guest. Besides this, he had already turned down an invitation from the British and he might offend them now by accepting the Soviet invitation. But in the end he was persuaded to agree for reasons of convenience and, mainly, of the security of all participants in the meeting. The Americans especially emphasised this circumstance. In particular they referred to the US Ambassador in Moscow, Averell Harriman, who, apart from anything else, pointed out to Roosevelt that were the President to decline the Russian offer and then something were to happen to the British or Soviet representatives on the way to the American Mission, he would feel responsible.

Judging by everything, the President of the USA did not regret his decision to stay in the Soviet embassy. Roosevelt's rooms opened directly on to the large hall where the plenary meetings of the conference took place, a point of great convenience for the President whose movement was restricted owing to paralysis in both legs.

On returning to Washington, President Roosevelt made a special statement at a press conference on December 17, 1943, saying that he had stayed in the Soviet embassy in Teheran, and not the American because Stalin had learned about a Nazi conspiracy. He added that Marshal Stalin had informed him that a conspiracy might have been organised with the aim of assassinating the three main participants in the conference, and had requested him to stay in the Soviet embassy in order to avoid the necessity of travelling through town.

The President went on to say that there were possibly about a hundred Nazi spies around Teheran at the time. He added that it would have been most advantageous for the Nazis to have done with Marshal Stalin, Churchill and himself, while they were travelling between the Soviet and American embassies which were some one and a half kilometres apart.

The Soviet side did everything possible to make the American President's stay in its embassy pleasant and comfortable. The Americans were given a free hand inside Roosevelt's apartments. As usual, the President's own chef and waiters saw to his meals.

The remaining members of the American delegation and the technical staff stayed in the American Mission and arrived each day for meetings.

The Soviet delegation consisting of Stalin, Molotov and Voroshilov was accommodated in the apartment of the Soviet Ambassador to Iran in a small, two-storeyed house, not far from the main building.

The Soviet delegation's technical staff were put up in what had previously been a Persian magnate's harem. The one-storeyed building in the form of a long rectangle was framed by a terrace of Moresque columns. The numerous rooms had two doors each: one on to the terrace and the other on to the long inner corridor. There was a square pool in front of the building.

The details of this estate's history I found out later. When Miller and I were brought from the airport to the former harem, it looked anything but romantic: piles of files and dossiers, stationery scattered all over the tables and camp beds placed disorderly in the rooms and covered with grey army blankets.

There was no time either for me to have a look round the exotic park. I had been warned that at two o'clock Stalin and Roosevelt would be having talks and I would have to interpret. However, I did manage to have a bite to eat in the modest canteen for technical staff in the neighbouring outhouse.

Ten minutes later I snatched up my notebook and ran off to the main building.

Stalin Meets Roosevelt

A Dialogue of Two Leaders

I had already acted several times as interpreter for Stalin, but each time I was to see him I became seized with agitation. In my own observation, even those who worked with him for many years always felt constrained in his presence.

I tried as best I could to collect myself before Stalin's meeting with Roosevelt. It required a maximum concentration of one's strength to interpret for Stalin. He spoke quietly and with an accent, and asking him to repeat was out of the question. One had to mobilise one's whole attention so as to catch instantly

what had been said and immediately reproduce it in English. Besides this, I had to note down everything that was said during the talks. I was saved only by the fact that Stalin spoke in a measured tone, with long pauses after each phrase for the translation.

It was also the interpreter's duty to draw up the official protocol, which had to be dictated to a stenographer, and the draft of a short telegram. Stalin checked this telegram personally and made corrections. If the negotiations took place in Moscow then the telegram was sent in cipher to the Soviet ambassadors in London and Washington. In this case, an information telegram of this sort was also sent to the members of the Politburo remaining in Moscow.

In many countries a great deal of experience has now been accumulated in simultaneous interpreting. There are now skilled professional interpreters, who are widely employed at the sessions of the UN General Assembly and at various international conferences and meetings. But at that time, at least in the Soviet Union, there were no specialists in this field. In the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs there were merely a few people who were invited to interpret at top-level meetings. V. N. Pavlov and I had to combine the role of interpreter with our work at the Commissariat. It is true that this had its advantages since we were usually well up on political issues under discussion. However, it meant there was very little time to improve our English. And yet interpreting at diplomatic negotiations demands special professional skills and tremendous concentration. One has to keep extending one's knowledge and constantly increase one's vocabulary. It is also essential to know shorthand, to be able to rapidly decipher the text after the talks and determine what is most important for making a short summary.

I personally had no special training for this work and I tried to improve as I went along.

I was always struck by the diligence and persistence of V. N. Pavlov. At that time he was responsible for reviewing the entire sphere of Anglo-Soviet relations. Naturally, there was a great deal of current work to be done. Our working day usually lasted for 14-16 hours with a short break from eight till ten in the evening. But Pavlov never missed one moment to brush up his English.

At this talk only Stalin, Roosevelt and myself, as interpreter, were present. Roosevelt said beforehand that he would be alone, without Charles Bohlen who usually interpreted for the American delegation. Evidently Roosevelt had decided not to take anyone with him in order to make the conversation more confidential. I was to interpret the entire discussion on my own.

When I entered the room adjoining the hall where the plenary meetings were held, Stalin was already there, dressed in his marshal's uniform. We greeted each other, and, going up to the low table surrounded by armchairs and a sofa, I put down my notebook and pencil on it. Stalin slowly paced up and down the room, took out a cigarette from a box with the name Gertsegovina Flor on it and lit it. He then screwed up his eyes and looked at me, saying:

"You're not too tired after your journey? Are you ready to interpret? The conversation will be important."

"Yes, I'm ready, Comrade Stalin. I rested well on the overnight stop in Baku. I feel fine."

Stalin went over to the table and put down his box of cigarettes. Then he struck a match and lit his cigarette which had gone out. He put out the match with a slow movement and pointed it at the sofa, saying:

"I shall sit here at the edge. Roosevelt will be in his wheelchair, so let's have him to the left of the arm-chair in which you will be sitting."

"Fine," I replied.

Once again Stalin began to stroll up and down the room, engrossed in thought. A few minutes later the door opened and a Filipino servant pushed in a wheel-chair in which Roosevelt sat smiling and leaning heavily on the arm-rests.

"Hello, Marshal Stalin," he exclaimed cheerfully, holding out his hand. "It seems I'm a little late. I do apologise."

"Oh no, you're right on time," objected Stalin. "I came a bit early. That's my duty as host, after all you are our guest, on Soviet territory, as one might say."

"I protest," laughed Roosevelt. "We firmly agreed to meet on neutral territory. Besides, this is my residence, so it's you who are my guest."

"We won't argue. Tell me instead, how do you find everything here. Is there anything you need?"

"Thank you, everything's fine. I feel quite at home."

"So you like it here?"

"I'm most obliged to you for making this house available to me."

"Would you come a little closer to the table, please," invited Stalin.

Before setting off for this meeting of the two leaders I had been very anxious as to whether I could cope with my task. Would I be able to understand what Roosevelt said straight away, and then be able to convey it immediately to Stalin in Russian? After all many Americans have a very peculiar pronunciation and some litter their speech with figurative and even slang expressions, making it difficult to grasp immediately the sense of what has been said. But everything went well. Roosevelt spoke lucidly, distinctly, drawing out his words somewhat, using short phrases and making frequent pauses. He had obviously had a great deal of experience of speaking through an interpreter.

The servant wheeled the chair to the place indicated, swung it round, put on the brake and left the room. Stalin offered Roosevelt a cigarette, but the latter refused it, thanking him, and took out his own cigarette case. He placed a cigarette in an elegant holder with his long thin fingers and lit it.

"I'm used to my own," Roosevelt said with a disarming smile and shrugged his shoulders as if in apology. "Where's your famous pipe, Marshal Stalin, the one, they say, you smoke out your enemies with?"

Stalin screwed up his eyes in a sly smile.

"It seems like I've smoked nearly all of them out already. But seriously speaking, my doctors have advised me to smoke my pipe less. All the same I have it here and, to give you pleasure, I'll bring it with me to the next meeting."

"Yes, you ought to pay heed to your doctor's advice," Roosevelt said seriously. "I have to do that too."

"Do you have any suggestions for the agenda for today's talks?" said Stalin in a more business-like tone.

"I don't think we ought right now to outline clearly the issues which could be discussed. We could simply limit ourselves to a general exchange of views regarding the current situation and prospects for the future. I would also be interested to hear information from you on the situation at your front."

"I'm willing to accept your suggestion," said Stalin. He picked up the box of Gertsegovina Flor slowly, opened it, selected a cigarette at great length, as if they differed from each other in some way, and lit it. Then he continued slowly: "As regards the situation at the Soviet front, perhaps the main thing is that our forces have recently lost Zhitomir, a vital railway junction."

"And what's the weather like at the front?" Roosevelt inquired.

"The only good weather is in the Ukraine, but on the other sectors of the front it is muddy and the soil hasn't frozen yet."

"I would like to divert some 30-40 German divisions away from the Soviet-German front," Roosevelt said with sympathy.

"It would be very good if that could be done."

"This is one of the issues which I intend to elucidate in the course of the next few days here in Teheran. The problem is that the Americans are faced with the task of supplying troops—two million men—who are situated at a distance of three thousand miles from the American continent."

"Yes, I quite understand your problems. You need good transport."

"I think that we'll solve this problem since ships in the United States are being built at a satisfactory rate."

Touching on the recent disturbances in the Lebanon, Stalin asked whether Roosevelt knew what the reasons for them were and who was responsible. Roosevelt did not answer immediately. Removing his pince-nez, he wiped it with the white handkerchief sticking out of his chest pocket, and then replaced it on the bridge of his nose. Finally he said, as if thinking out loud:

"I think that the French National Committee is to blame. The British and French guaranteed the Lebanon independence and the Lebanese obtained their own constitution and President. Then they wanted to change the constitution a little, which the French refused them to do, arresting the president and the cabinet of ministers. Now order has been re-established and everything is calm in the Lebanon."

During the discussions, Stalin and Roosevelt touched on many issues and problems. Roosevelt, in particular, developed in general terms the idea of post-war cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union. Stalin welcomed this idea and pointed out that after the war, the Soviet Union would repre-

sent a large market for the United States. Roosevelt reacted to this remark with interest and stressed that when the war was over, America would require a great amount of raw materials and, therefore, he thought that close trade ties would exist between the two countries. Stalin noted that if the Americans would supply the Soviet Union with equipment, the latter could provide raw materials. The conversation then turned to the future of France. Roosevelt stated that he did not like de Gaulle but that he considered General Giraud a very nice man and a good general. Roosevelt also said that the Americans were equipping 11 French divisions, and, in connection with this, touched on the situation in France and the moods and feelings of the various sections of the country's population.

"The French," Roosevelt remarked, "are a good people but they need totally new leaders, no older than forty, who have not occupied any posts in the previous French government."

Stalin expressed the opinion that a long time would be required for such changes. As for certain ruling quarters in France, he continued, they evidently thought that the Allies would hand them France on a plate and rather than fighting together with the Allies they preferred to collaborate with the Germans. And what is more, without even asking the French people.

Roosevelt said that in Churchill's opinion France would fully revive and soon become a great power.

"But I don't share this opinion," continued Roosevelt. "I think many years will pass before this happens. If the French assume that the Allies will hand them France on a plate then they are mistaken. They'll have to work very hard before France becomes a really great power."

These remarks by the American President concealed a serious difference of opinion between the United States and Britain on the issue of who should exercise power on the liberated territory of North Africa, and later, after the landing in Normandy, in France itself. As it subsequently transpired, the United States, which carried out the landing in North Africa, was counting on establishing military and political domination not only over this territory, but also over the whole French Resistance Movement, with the aim of gaining a foothold on the European continent, in France. In North Africa Washington counted on Admiral Darlan, who had earlier collaborated with the Germans,

instead of General de Gaulle, then in London, heading the National Committee of Fighting France.

In the end, Washington had to reconcile itself with General de Gaulle who got the chance of leaving for France soon after the landing of the Allies in Normandy. But the nature of the relations formed then between the Americans and de Gaulle undoubtedly played a definite role in the future.

During Roosevelt's conversation with Stalin, the difference in approaches of the United States and Britain on the future of colonial possessions was also revealed. Roosevelt spoke much of the need for a new approach to the problem of colonial and dependent countries after the war. Perhaps he was sincerely thinking of the possibility of gradually granting them self-government and, eventually, independence, a theme which the American President returned to time and again during the Teheran Conference. But speaking in such a way, he was, voluntarily or not, reflecting the interests of those quarters in the USA who were preparing the ground for US penetration of the colonial countries under the guise of the talk about the revision of the status of the colonial possessions of European capitalist countries.

In this respect the conversation which took place during a meeting between Stalin and Roosevelt in Teheran was very indicative. Touching on the future of Indo-China, Roosevelt said that three or four trustees could be appointed and after 30 to 40 years the people of Indo-China could be prepared for self-government. He said that the same could be done with other colonies.

"Churchill," continued the President, "does not wish to act firmly with regard to the implementation of this proposal on trusteeship, because he's afraid that the principle will have to be applied to British colonies as well. When our Secretary of State, Hull, was in Moscow, he had with him a document drawn up by me on the establishment of an international commission on colonies. This commission was intended to inspect the colonial countries with the aim of studying the situation in those countries and ways of improving it. The entire work of this commission would be given wide publicity."

Stalin supported the idea of establishing such a commission and pointed out that it could be approached with complaints, requests, and so on. Roosevelt was clearly pleased with the So-

viet reaction but did not conceal his anxiety about Churchill's possible attitude. He even warned Stalin that it was better not to touch on India in conversations with the British Prime Minister because, as far as he knew, Churchill had no thoughts on India at present. In fact, Churchill was intent on putting this question off until the war was over.

"India is Churchill's sore spot," Stalin remarked.

"You're right here," agreed Roosevelt. "Nevertheless, in the end, Britain will have to do something about India. I hope to discuss this in more detail with you, bearing in mind that it is easier to solve this question for people removed from the Indian issue than for those directly involved in it."

Stalin reacted with caution to this comment. All he said was that the President's remarks were interesting.

Roosevelt glanced at his watch. There was very little time left before the official opening of the conference, set for 16.00 hours.

"I think we better finish off," said Roosevelt. "We should rest a little and sort out our thoughts before the plenary session. I feel we've had a very useful exchange of views and it was very pleasant to meet you and discuss things so frankly."

"It was nice to meet you too," Stalin replied, rising, and he bowed slightly to Roosevelt.

I went into the next room to call the President's servant. He appeared at once and, grasping the handles of the wheel-chair, took Roosevelt off to his quarters. Stalin went into the next room where Molotov and Voroshilov were waiting.

At the Round Table

The plenary meetings of the conference took place in a spacious hall decorated in the Empire style. In the middle of the room stood a large round table covered with a cream-coloured table-cloth. Placed round the table were arm-chairs upholstered in striped silk and with fanciful mahogany arm-rests. In the centre of the table was a wooden stand holding the flags of the three countries participating in the conference. On the table in front of the arm-chairs lay notebooks and sharpened pencils. The main delegates and interpreters sat right at the table, while

the remaining members of the delegations and technical staff sat on chairs placed in symmetrical rows behind the arm-chairs.

The Soviet delegation was the smallest, consisting, as I have already said, of Stalin, Molotov, and Voroshilov. The United States and Britain were represented by much larger delegations.

From the United States: President F. D. Roosevelt; H. Hopkins, the President's special assistant, A. Harriman, US Ambassador to the USSR; General G. Marshall, Chief of Staff; Admiral Y. S. King, Commander-in-Chief, US Navy; General H. H. Arnold, Head of the US Army Air Force; General B. Somerwell, Army Service Forces; Admiral W. Leahy, Chief of Staff to the President of the USA; General J.R. Deane, Head of the US Military Mission in Moscow.

From Britain: Prime Minister W. Churchill; A. Eden, Foreign Secretary; A. Kerr, British Ambassador to the USSR; General A. Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff; Field-Marshal J. Dill; A. Cunningham, First Sea Lord; Ch. Portal, Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Chief of the Air Staff; General H. Ismay, Chief of Staff; General Martel, Head of the British Military Mission in the USSR.

To the right of Churchill sat his personal interpreter, Major Birse. Next to Roosevelt, also in the capacity of interpreter, was Charles Bohlen. He was then the First Secretary of the United States Embassy in Moscow. From the Soviet delegation, Stalin and Molotov sat in the first row along with Pavlov and myself as official interpreters of the Soviet delegation. Voroshilov usually sat in a chair in the second row.

The discussions at the plenary meetings were conducted freely, without a fixed agenda. The delegates spoke spontaneously without using any papers, simply expressing their ideas on the issues under discussion. As a result, the discussions occasionally jumped from one subject to another, then returning to the original problem. The sides had arranged in advance that Roosevelt would chair the first plenary meeting. He fulfilled this task brilliantly, demonstrating his many years' experience as a leader.

The first plenary meeting opened at 16.00 hours on November 28, 1943, and went on for three and a half hours. Opening the meeting, Roosevelt said:

"As the youngest head of Government present here I should like to take the liberty of speaking first. I should like to assure the members of the new family—the members of the present conference gathered around this table—that we are gathered here for one purpose, for the purpose of winning the war as soon as possible."¹

Roosevelt went on to make a few remarks about the conduct of the conference.

"We do not intend to make public anything that will be said here, but we shall address each other as friends, openly and candidly."

The mutual commitment not to make public anything said at the Teheran Conference, taken by the participants, undoubtedly promoted the free exchange of opinions and helped all sides to understand the positions of their partners better. This helped create an atmosphere which made for fruitful cooperation between the three powers in the fight against their mutual enemy, and for the strengthening at this stage of the unity of the anti-Nazi coalition, despite fundamental differences in the social and political system of the Soviet Union on the one hand and the United States and Britain on the other.

Having unleashed their anti-Soviet propaganda campaign after the war, the ruling quarters in the Western powers violated their commitment not to make public material from the Teheran Conference and unilaterally published numerous documents and memoirs about it. This was done with the aim of falsifying the Soviet policy and distorting the Soviet Union's stand on the vital issues of the Second World War period. In this connection, Soviet recordings of the talks and meetings of the Teheran Conference were published in Moscow in 1961.

But at the time of the opening of the Teheran Conference, Roosevelt's words about maintaining secrecy sounded like a solemn oath.

Going on to speak of the conduct of the conference, the US President announced that the delegations' staffs could consider military matters separately, while the delegations themselves dis-

¹ Here and below documents and materials of the Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam conferences are quoted from: *The Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam Conferences. Documents*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969.

cussed other issues, for instance the problems of the post-war settlement.

"I think," Roosevelt said in conclusion, "that this conference will be a success, and that our three nations, which united in the course of the present war, will strengthen their ties and will create the prerequisites for the close cooperation of future generations."

Before getting down to practical work, Roosevelt enquired whether Stalin or Churchill wished to say a few general words on the importance of the meeting and what it meant to humanity.

Churchill immediately raised his right hand, requesting to speak. He spoke in a measured voice, articulating words one after the other, rather like a mason laying bricks. During the pauses for interpreting he moved his lips silently, as if saying over to himself the phrase which he was about to utter. It was as though he was listening in his mind to how it sounded. Then, having made sure that he had chosen the right words, he once again articulated them with the well-trained voice of a professional public speaker. Emphasising the solemnity of the moment, he stood up at the table and moved his chair back so as to make room for his bulky figure.

"This is the greatest concentration of world forces that ever existed in the history of mankind," he said. "We hold the solution of the problem of reducing the length of the war, the winning of victory, the future of mankind. I pray that we may be worthy of this remarkable opportunity granted to us by God, the opportunity of serving mankind."

Glancing over all those present, Churchill slowly lowered himself into his chair.

Roosevelt then enquired of the head of the Soviet delegation whether he would like to say anything. Stalin began to speak without rising from his seat. The hall fell silent. This may have been because the majority of those present had never heard Stalin's voice before. But perhaps it was because he spoke so quietly. He said:

"In greeting this conference of the representatives of the three Governments I should like to make a few remarks. I think we are being pampered by history. She has given us possession of very big forces and very great opportunities. I hope that we

shall do everything at this conference to make due use, within the framework of our co-operation, of the power and authority that our peoples have vested in us. Let us now begin our work."

Roosevelt nodded in agreement. Then he glanced round all the participants in the conference as if inviting them all to speak first on the matters in hand. But nobody expressed such a wish. So, opening a black file lying in front of him, the President looked through the papers, cleared his throat and said:

"May I start with a general review of the war and the requirements of the war at the present time. Of course, I shall speak of this from the standpoint of the USA. We, like the British Empire and the Soviet Union, hope for an early victory. I should like to start with a review of that part of the war which concerns the United States rather than the Soviet Union and Great Britain. I mean the war in the Pacific Ocean, where the United States bears the brunt of the war, receiving help from the Australian and New Zealand forces."

President Roosevelt gave a brief survey of the military situation in that part of the globe. He touched more specifically on operations in the region of Burma, reporting on plans to liberate the northern part of that country from the Japanese. In Roosevelt's words, all that was aimed at rendering assistance to China in the war, at opening the Burmese road, and at securing positions from which it would be possible to defeat Japan as soon as possible after the rout of Germany. Then the President briefly described the situation in the European theatre of operations.

Roosevelt set the tone, as it were, with his review of military operations. After him, Stalin began his speech with a survey of the situation at the front.

The head of the Soviet delegation welcomed the United States' successes in the Pacific Ocean. He added that the Soviet Union could not at the time join in the struggle against Japan, since the country's entire forces had to be concentrated for the war against Germany. The Soviet forces in the Far East were more or less sufficient to maintain defence, but they would have to be doubled at least before undertaking any attack. The time for joining with the Western Allies in the Pacific theatre of operations would only be after the defeat of Germany.

"As for... the war in Europe..." continued the Soviet representative. "First of all, a few words in the form of a report about the way we have been and are conducting operations since the July offensive of the Germans. If I am going into too great detail I could shorten my statement."

"We are prepared to hear everything you wish to say," interjected Churchill.

Stalin continued:

"I must say, in passing, that we ourselves have been lately preparing for an offensive. The Germans were ahead of us, but since we had been preparing for an offensive and had massed a great force, after we beat back the German offensive, it was relatively easy for us to go over to the offensive. I must say that although the opinion about us is that we plan everything beforehand, we did not expect the successes we scored in August and September. The Germans proved to be weaker than we expected. At present, according to our intelligence, the Germans have 210 divisions on our front, and another six divisions on the way there. In addition, there are 50 non-German divisions, including the Finns. Thus, altogether the Germans have 260 divisions on our front, including up to 10 Hungarian, up to 20 Finnish, and up to 16 or 18 Rumanian."

Roosevelt enquired about the numerical strength of a German division. Stalin explained that together with auxiliary forces a German division numbered from 12,000 to 13,000 men. He added that from 300 to 330 divisions were operating from the Soviet side.

Going over to the latest events on the Soviet-German front, Stalin said that this surplus of forces was being used by the Soviet side for offensive operations. But as time goes on, he continued, because of this offensive activity, the difference between the number of Soviet and German divisions was becoming smaller and smaller. Another great difficulty was that the Germans were destroying everything as they retreated. That made ammunition supply more difficult. That was the reason why the Soviet offensive had slowed down.

"In the last three weeks," the Soviet representative went on to say, "the Germans launched offensive operations in the Ukraine, south and west of Kiev. They have recaptured Zhitomir, an important railway junction. This has been announced. It looks

as if one of these days they will take Korosten, also an important railway junction. In that area the Germans have five new tank divisions and three old tank divisions, altogether 8 tank divisions, and also 22 or 23 infantry and motorised divisions. Their goal is to recapture Kiev. Thus, we are faced with some difficulties in the future."

"Therefore," said Stalin, "it would be very important to accelerate the Allied invasion of Northern France."

Speaking after Stalin, Churchill immediately turned to the Anglo-American plans for a landing in France and the opening of a second front in Europe. This was undoubtedly the most important issue at the Teheran Conference and was the object of the most heated discussions, both at official and unofficial meetings.

Operation Overlord

The question of opening a second front in Europe was given special attention at the very first plenary meeting of the Teheran Conference.

As mentioned above, the initiative was taken by Stalin. President Roosevelt stressed that the operation across the Channel was very important and of particular interest to the Soviet Union. He added that the Western Allies had been drawing up the plans over the preceding year and a half, but that they could still not decide on a date for the operation because of a shortage of tonnage.

"We want," said the President, "not only to cross the Channel, but to pursue the enemy into the heart of the territory. The English Channel is that unpleasant strip of water that excludes the possibility of starting the expedition across the Channel before May 1, that is why the plan drawn up at Quebec was based on the premise that the expedition across the Channel would be made on approximately May 1, 1944."

Pointing out that any landing operation would require special craft, Roosevelt touched on the question of priority and sequence of various operations, saying:

"If we undertake large-scale landing operations in the Mediterranean, the expedition across the Channel will have to be post-

poned for two or three months. That is why we should like to have the advice of our Soviet colleagues on the matter, and also advice on how best to use the forces now in the Mediterranean area, considering that there are few ships there too. But we do not want to defer the date of the invasion across the Channel beyond May or June. At the same time there are many places where Anglo-American forces could be used. They could be used in Italy, in the Adriatic area, in the Aegean area, and finally, to help Turkey if she enters the war. All this we must decide here. We should very much like to help the Soviet Union and to draw off a part of the German forces from the Soviet front. We should like to have the advice of our Soviet friends on how we could best ease their position."

Having finished speaking, Roosevelt asked whether Churchill wished to add anything to what had been said.

Churchill remained silent for a moment, chewing his lip, and then he slowly said:

"May I speak and express my opinion after Marshal Stalin has expressed his. At the same time I should like to say that I agree in principle with what has been said by President Roosevelt."

Evidently the British Prime Minister by refusing to state his position, which in fact differed considerably from the view of the American President, wanted to sound out the Soviet side so as then to put forward a corresponding argument. Stalin guessed Churchill's manoeuvre. Speaking of a second front, he made it clear that the Soviet side was counting on the Allied landing in Northern France and, what is more, without further delay, for this operation alone would ease the situation on the Soviet front.

"I may be mistaken," said Stalin, "but we Russians thought that the Italian theatre was important only to the extent of ensuring free navigation of Allied shipping in the Mediterranean Sea. Only in that sense is the Italian theatre of operations important. That is what we thought, and that is what we continue to think. As for the idea of launching an offensive from Italy directly against Germany, we Russians think that the Italian theatre is not suitable for such purposes."

While this was being interpreted into English, Stalin took a curved pipe out of his tunic pocket, opened the box of Gertse-

govina Flor, took out several cigarettes, broke them up slowly and sprinkled the tobacco into his pipe, then lit it, screwed up his eyes and surveyed those present. When his gaze met Roosevelt's, the latter smiled and winked slyly, indicating that he remembered Stalin's promise about his pipe. But perhaps this gesture by Roosevelt had a deeper meaning. Perhaps he wanted to express his sympathy with the way Stalin had countered Churchill's unexpressed intention to question the expediency of an Allied landing in France.

The translation came to an end and, putting his pipe aside, Stalin continued:

"We Russians believe that the best result would be yielded by a blow at the enemy in Northern or North-Western France. . . Germany's weakest spot is France. Of course, this is a difficult operation, and the Germans in France will defend themselves desperately; nevertheless that is the best solution. Those are all the remarks I have."

Roosevelt thanked Stalin and asked whether Churchill was ready to speak. Churchill nodded, cleared his throat and began to talk in his peculiar manner, carefully selecting and weighing up his words. He said that Britain and the United States had long since decided to attack Germany via Northern or North-Western France and extensive preparations for this were being carried out. The British Prime Minister went on to say that many facts and figures would be required to prove why this operation had not been accomplished in 1943, but that now it had been decided to attack Germany in 1944. The place for the attack had been chosen and the task now facing the British and Americans was to create the conditions for transferring an army into France across the Channel in the late spring of 1944. The forces that could be accumulated for that purpose in May or June would consist of 16 British and 19 American divisions. These forces would be followed by the main force, and it was planned that in the course of Operation Overlord about a million men would be transferred across the Channel during May, June and July.

Having given these assurances, Churchill went over to the problem of using the Anglo-American forces in the other areas of the European theatre. Carefully choosing his wording and as though thinking aloud, he repeatedly pointed out that he was

putting forward his suggestions only as the statement of a question. However, concealed behind all these reservations was the British Prime Minister's firm intention to attack Germany not from the west, but from the south and south-east, or, as Churchill liked to say, "from the soft underbelly of Europe".

Saying that there was still quite some time until Operation Overlord was due to be carried out—about six months, the Prime Minister raised the question of using the Western Allied forces in the Mediterranean in the meantime. This was also motivated by a desire to help the Soviet Union as soon as possible. Of course, Churchill said, Overlord would be carried out in time or, possibly, with some delay. This remark by Churchill once again, as if by chance, put the date set by Roosevelt for the start of the operation across the Channel into doubt.

Neither Stalin nor Roosevelt reacted to this move by the British representative. When Major Birse had finished interpreting the last phrase, Churchill paused at length, waiting for a response. He picked up his cigar which had half turned to ash in the ashtray, carefully brought it to his lips, inhaled and, receiving no objections, continued:

"We have already sent seven battle-wise divisions from the Mediterranean area, and also a part of the landing craft for Overlord. Taking this into account, and the bad weather in Italy besides, I must say that we are somewhat disappointed at not yet having taken Rome. Our first task is to take Rome, and we expect to wage the decisive battle in January and to win it. General Alexander, the Commander of the 15th Army Group who is under the orders of General Eisenhower, believes that it is quite possible to win the battle for Rome. In addition, it may be possible to capture and destroy more than 11 or 12 enemy divisions. We are not planning to move on into Lombardy or to cross the Alps into Germany. We merely plan to move on somewhat north of Rome up to the Pisa-Rimini line, after which we could make the landing in Southern France and across the Channel."

Addressing the Soviet delegation, Churchill asked:

"Are our operations in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, which could cause some delay in the operation across the Channel, of any interest to the Soviet Government?"

And not waiting for an answer, he added hastily:

"We do not as yet have any definite decision on this question, and we have come here to settle it."

"There is another possibility," Roosevelt intervened. "It might be expedient to make a landing in the northern part of the Adriatic when the Soviet armies approach Odessa."

"If we take Rome and block Germany from the south," continued the British Prime Minister, "we would then commence operations in Western or Southern France, and also extend assistance to the guerrilla armies... A commission could be set up to study the question and draw up a document in full detail."

Listening attentively to Churchill's arguments, Stalin requested to speak.

"I have a few questions: I understand that there are 35 divisions for invasion operations in the north of France."

"Yes, that is correct," answered Churchill.

"Before the operations to invade the north of France," Stalin continued, "it is planned to carry out the operation in the Italian theatre to take Rome, after which it is planned to go on the defensive in Italy."

Churchill nodded.

Stalin continued to put questions:

"I also understand that three other operations are planned, one of which will consist of a landing in the Adriatic area."

"The carrying out of these operations may be useful to the Russians," said Churchill. His tone reflected disappointment.

Then he began to explain that the greatest problem was the transfer of the necessary forces. Operation Overlord would be started by 35 divisions, he said. From then on the number of troops would be increased by divisions transferred from the United States, rising to 50-60 divisions. The British and American air forces, then in Britain, were to be doubled and trebled in the following six months. Besides this, work was already being carried on continuously to accumulate forces in Britain.

However, Stalin did not let himself be put off by these arguments. He asked again:

"Did I understand correctly that apart from the operations to take Rome it is planned to carry out another operation in the Adriatic, and also an operation in Southern France?"

Avoiding a direct answer, the British Prime Minister noted that it was planned to carry out an attack in Southern France at the moment Operation Overlord was begun. Some troops in Italy could be released for this, but the operation had not as yet been worked out in detail. As for the plans for a landing in the Adriatic area, Churchill completely avoided this point.

Stalin looked fixedly at him and said in a rather gloomy tone: "In my opinion, it would be better to make Operation Overlord the basis of all operations in 1944. If a landing were made in Southern France at the same time as that operation, both groups of forces could join in France. That is why it would be well to have two operations: Operation Overlord and the landing in Southern France as a supporting operation. At the same time the operation in the Rome area would be a diversionary operation. In carrying out the landing in France from the North and the South, there could be a build up of forces when these forces are joined. France is Germany's weak spot."

The duel between Stalin and Churchill continued. The leader of the British Tory had no wish to lay down his weapons. He stood his ground again and again, making out that by suggesting the development of operations in South-Eastern Europe, he was concerned only with achieving a speedy victory over the enemy.

"I agree," declared the British Prime Minister, "with Marshal Stalin's considerations concerning the undesirability of dispersing the forces. . . I'm afraid that in this six-month period, during which we could take Rome and prepare for big operations in Europe, our army will remain inactive and will not exert pressure on the enemy. I fear that in that case Parliament would reproach me for not giving any assistance to the Russians."

This was a direct challenge.

"I think that Overlord is a big operation," Stalin parried. "It would be considerably facilitated and would be sure to have an effect if it were supported from the south of France. I personally would go to this extreme. I would go on the defensive in Italy, abandoning the capture of Rome, and would start an operation in Southern France, drawing off German forces from Northern France. In about two or three months I would start the operation in the north of France. This plan would ensure the suc-

cess of Operation Overlord; the two armies could meet, and that would result in a build up of forces."

Clearly Churchill did not like this suggestion. He replied sharply that he could adduce even more arguments to support his opinion but had to point out that the Allies would be weaker if they did not take Rome. Suggesting that this issue be discussed by military specialists, Churchill declared firmly that the struggle for Rome was already going on and a refusal to take the city would mean defeat. This could not be explained to the House of Commons. Overlord, in fact, could be carried out in August.

The atmosphere was becoming tense and Roosevelt attempted to calm things down.

"We could carry out Overlord on time," he said, "if there were no operations in the Mediterranean. If there are operations in the Mediterranean this will defer the date of Operation Overlord. I should not like to delay Overlord."

Churchill sat frowning and puffing desperately at his cigar. The silence lasted several minutes. Stalin was the first to speak. He stressed again that he considered a landing in France the most expedient and that there should be simultaneous or almost simultaneous landings in the north and south. He said that experience of operations on the Soviet-German front had demonstrated that attacking the enemy from two sides was more effective, because he was then compelled to shuttle his forces from one side to another. The Allies would do well to take this experience into consideration with regards the landing in France.

It was difficult to object to this but, as before, Churchill did not want to give in.

"I think," he said, "that we might undertake diversionary acts . . . regardless of the invasion of Southern or Northern France. I personally regard the idleness of our army in the Mediterranean as a highly negative fact. That is why we cannot guarantee that the date of May 1 will be met precisely. It would be a big mistake to fix that date. I cannot sacrifice the operations in the Mediterranean just to keep the date of May 1. Of course we must come to a definite agreement on the matter. This question could be discussed by our military specialists."

Throwing off his disguise, Churchill thus made it plain that he was intent on fighting for the achievement of his plans in

the Mediterranean and was ready for the sake of this to break the deadline for the start of operations in Northern France which had already been agreed in principle. It was evident that at this stage any further discussion might have led to undesirable tension and to an exchange of harsh words.

"All right," said Stalin firmly. "We did not expect a discussion of purely military matters, that is why we did not invite representatives of the General Staff to come along, but I think that Marshal Voroshilov and I can arrange something."

I finished work very late that first evening in Teheran. But I did not feel tired, and walked unhurriedly along the garden paths to our residence. The bright moon was peeping through the leaves on the trees and the air was saturated with the scents of autumn flowers, dying leaves, the earth and the water plants growing thick in the ponds. I went up to the pool and sat down on a marble seat still warm from the sun. I did not feel capable of falling asleep because the nervous tension which had built up during the day had still not eased.

It was only then that I fully sensed the importance of everything that I had witnessed. While I was interpreting at the negotiations and then drawing up the protocol and composing draft telegrams to Moscow, I was so totally absorbed in my work that I did not think of the fact that here, in the Iranian capital, far from the frontlines, something was taking place of vital importance for the future course of the war and for victory. I suddenly realised that the process of creating history was happening before my very eyes, in concentrated form, as it were. Undoubtedly, the events occurring in Teheran then were of immense historic significance; their importance went beyond the limits of the current moment and they were destined to leave an imprint on the future development of world events.

Conflict Between the Allies

Churchill's Balkan Adventure

In subsequent years Churchill made several attempts to deny that instead of Operation Overlord, he was planning an invasion of the continent in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea,

primarily in the Balkans. Of course, he was in no hurry with this either. His plans were connected with the intention of intercepting the Red Army's course at a corresponding moment and stopping its further advance towards the West.

Since this plan failed, Churchill later began to assert that nothing of the kind had existed. In his memoirs, he returns to this issue time and again, insisting that he was misunderstood. He even calls these Balkan plans "a legend".

In reality, as the Teheran talks show, Churchill was pursuing just such a line. Indeed, it was his main objective. Having suffered a setback, he was compelled to agree to the landing in Normandy.

Churchill's real plan was perfectly clear to President Roosevelt also. Elliott Roosevelt, who was in Teheran at that time, published soon after his father's death a record of his discussions with Roosevelt. Mentioning the talks on the opening of a second front in Europe, Roosevelt told his son that Churchill had a special position.

"'Whenever the P.M. argued for our invasion through the Balkans,'" explained Roosevelt, "'it was quite obvious to everyone in the room what he really meant. That he was above all else anxious to knife up into central Europe, in order to keep the Red Army out of Austria and Rumania, even Hungary, if possible. Stalin knew it, I knew it, everybody knew it...'"

"'But he never said it?'"

"'Certainly not,'" Roosevelt answered. "'Uncle Joe [Stalin—*Author*], when he argued the military advantages of invasion from the west, and the inadvisability of splitting our forces into two parts—he was always conscious of the political implications, too, I'm sure. Never let on, though, by so much as a word.'"

"'He lay back again, silent.

"'I don't suppose...'" I began hesitantly.

"'Hmmm?'"

"'What I mean is, Churchill... well, he isn't...'"

"'You wondering whether maybe he isn't right? That maybe it would be advisable for us to hit the Balkans, too?'"

"'Well...'"

"'Elliott: our chiefs of Staff are convinced of one thing. The way to kill the most Germans, with the least loss of American soldiers, is to mount one great big invasion and then slam 'em

with everything we've got. It makes sense to me. . . It makes sense to the Red Army people. That's that. It's the quickest way to win the war. That's all.'

"'Trouble is, the P.M. [Churchill—*Author*] is thinking too much of the post-war, and where England will be. He's scared of letting the Russians get too strong.

"'Maybe the Russians will get strong in Europe. Whether that's bad depends on a whole lot of factors.

"'The one thing I'm sure of is this: if the way to save American lives, the way to win as short a war as possible, is from the west and from the west alone, without wasting landing-craft and men and matériel in the Balkan mountains, and our chiefs are convinced it is, then that's that!' He smiled, but grimly. 'I see no reason for putting the lives of American soldiers in jeopardy in order to protect real or fancied, British interests on the European continent. We're at war, and our job is to win it as fast as possible, and without adventures. I think—I hope—that he's learned we mean that, once, finally, and for all.'"¹

I have allowed myself to quote such a long extract for two reasons. First, it will help the reader to understand better the aims which Churchill was pursuing by insisting on his Balkan adventure. Second, it shows that Roosevelt perfectly understood Churchill's real plans. It is obvious from the fact that the American President told his son of this, and during the days of the Teheran Conference at that, that the plans of the ruling quarters in Britain were divorced from the task of achieving a swift victory over the common enemy. Apparently Roosevelt genuinely disapproved of Churchill's line on this matter. But, it should be borne in mind that there were influential groups in Washington who, like Churchill, were in no hurry to open a second front in Europe.

The King's Sword Presented to Stalingrad

A solemn ceremony took place on November 29, before the opening of the conference plenary meeting; it was a demonstration of Allied unity in the struggle against the common enemy.

¹ Elliott Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, New York, 1946, pp. 184-86.

Such a demonstration was highly opportune. It dispersed somewhat the dark clouds which had gathered over the conference and reminded that the anti-Nazi coalition was still faced with great and difficult problems which could only be solved through mutual and concerted efforts.

The presentation to the citizens of Stalingrad of a specially made sword, on behalf of King George VI and the British people, was arranged with the utmost splendour. The large, shining sword with its two-handled hilt and ornamented sheath, which had been forged by the most skilful, hereditary armourers in Britain, symbolised a tribute of respect to the heroes of Stalingrad, the town where the backbone of the fascist beast was broken.

The hall began to fill up long before the ceremony started. All the delegates and the leaders of the armies, fleets and air forces of the countries making up the anti-Hitler coalition were present when "the Big Three" arrived.

Stalin was wearing a light grey tunic with his marshal's shoulder-straps. This time, Churchill also appeared in military uniform. From that day onwards, the British Prime Minister wore his uniform constantly in Teheran, and everyone regarded it as his peculiar reaction to Stalin's marshal's dress. At first Churchill had worn a dark blue pin-striped suit, but on seeing Stalin in uniform, he had immediately ordered himself a blue-grey full-dress coat of a senior officer of the Royal Air Force. This uniform arrived just in time for the ceremony of the presentation of the sword. Roosevelt, as usual, was in civilian clothes.

The guard of honour consisted of Red Army and the British officers. An orchestra played the Soviet and British national anthems and everyone stood at attention. Then the music stopped and a solemn moment of silence ensued. Churchill slowly went up to the large black box lying on the table and opened it. The sword, inside its sheath, rested on a claret-coloured velvet pillow. Churchill took the sword in both hands and, holding it suspended, he turned to Stalin and said:

"I have been commanded by His Majesty King George VI to present to you for transmission to the City of Stalingrad this sword of honor, the design of which His Majesty has chosen and approved. The sword of honor was made by English craftsmen whose ancestors have been employed in sword-making for generations. The blade of the sword bears the inscription: 'To the

steelhearted citizens of Stalingrad, a gift from King George VI as a token of the homage of the British people'.¹

Taking a few steps forward, Churchill presented the sword to Stalin, behind whom was standing the Soviet guard of honour, with submachine-guns atilt. Stalin took the sword and pulled it out of its sheath. The blade glinted coldly. Stalin raised it to his lips and kissed it. Then, holding the sword in his hands, he said in a low voice:

"On behalf of the citizens of Stalingrad, I wish to express my deep appreciation for the gift of King George VI. The citizens of Stalingrad will value this gift most highly, and I ask you, Mr. Prime Minister, to convey their thanks to His Majesty the King."²

There was a pause. Stalin slowly walked round the table and went over to Roosevelt to show him the sword. Churchill held the sheath while Roosevelt looked carefully at the huge blade. Reading out loud the inscription on the sword, Roosevelt added:

"Truly they had hearts of steel."³

Then he gave it back to Stalin who went over to the table where the case was lying. Carefully he laid the sword in its sheath back in the case and closed the lid. Then he gave it to Voroshilov who carried the sword into the next room, accompanied by the guard of honour.

We all went out to be photographed on the terrace. It was warm and there was no wind. The sun lit up the leaves, turned golden by the autumn. Stalin and Churchill stopped in the middle of the terrace, where Roosevelt was also brought in his wheelchair. Three arm-chairs had been brought out there for "the Big Three". The ministers, marshals, generals, admirals and ambassadors stood behind these arm-chairs. Newspaper photographers and cameramen scurried about searching for the best positions. Then the suite moved to one side and "the Big Three" remained alone against a background of the tall doors which led from the terrace to the conference hall. This photograph was to become historical and world famous.

¹ E. Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, pp. 181, 182.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

The Atmosphere Worsens

The participants in the conference returned again and again to the matter of Overlord, but this did not bring them one step closer to the main issue—the dates and sequence of the invasion of Northern France. Churchill did not abandon his attempts to replace Overlord by some other operation in the Mediterranean or in the Balkans. At one of the plenary meetings he stated again that the British had a considerable army in the Mediterranean and wanted it to be in action there in the course of the whole year and not to be idle. Therefore, he said, he was asking the Russians to examine the whole problem and the various alternatives which the British were proposing as to the best use of the available forces in the Mediterranean. The British Prime Minister put forward several questions which, in his opinion, were to be studied in detail.

First, what assistance could be given to Operation Overlord, using the forces in the Mediterranean? The British would like to have enough landing craft there to transfer two divisions. This could help speed up the advance of Anglo-American forces along the Italian peninsula in order to destroy the enemy forces there. There was another possibility of using these forces. They would be sufficient for the capture of the island of Rhodes in the event Turkey entered the war. The third possibility of using these forces was that, minus their losses, they could be used in Southern France in six months to support Operation Overlord. None of these possibilities was excluded, but the question of dates arose. The use of these two divisions, no matter which of the three possible operations they were involved in, could not be carried out without deferring Operation Overlord, or without diverting a part of the landing facilities from the Indian Ocean area.

"There is our dilemma," Churchill exclaimed pathetically, raising his arms to the heavens. "In order to decide which way to choose we should like to hear the view of Marshal Stalin concerning the over-all strategic situation, because we are delighted and inspired by the military experience of our Russian allies. . .

"...The next problem I want to speak of," the head of the British delegation continued, "is political rather than military. . . I have in mind the Balkans. In the Balkans there are 21 German

divisions apart from garrison troops. Of this number . . . 54,000 German troops are concentrated in the Aegean islands. In addition, there are not less than 12 Bulgarian divisions in the Balkans."

Having pointed to the importance of the enemy forces in the Balkans, Churchill began to assert that Britain had no interests or ambitions in the Balkans. All she wanted to do was to tie down the 21 German divisions in the Balkans and, if possible, to destroy them.

"We want to work concertedly with our Russian allies," Churchill said.

These assurances did not sound very convincing. In response, the Soviet representative stated again that of the military problems Operation Overlord should be regarded as the main and decisive issue.

"Of course," Stalin said, "the Russians are in need of help. I should like to state that if the question is one of aid to us, we do expect aid from those who carry out the operations planned, and we expect real aid."

He emphasised above all that it was essential that the date of Operation Overlord was not postponed, and that May should be the deadline for carrying out this operation. The support of Overlord by a landing in Southern France should also be stipulated. In the opinion of the Soviet delegation, it would be best to solve all these problems during the Teheran Conference, and it saw no reason why this could not be achieved.

Roosevelt listened attentively to Stalin and then said that he attached great importance to dates and that if there was agreement on Operation Overlord, then a date should be agreed upon for this operation. In his opinion, Operation Overlord could be carried out during the first week of May, or postponed somewhat. The postponement of Overlord could result from one or two operations in the Mediterranean which would require landing facilities and planes. If an expedition were to be carried out in the eastern part of the Mediterranean and were to fail, then additional matériel and troops would have to be transferred there. In that case Overlord would not be carried out in time. Therefore, the American President said, the staffs would have to work out plans for operations in the Balkans in such a way that they would not prejudice Overlord.

"That is right," Stalin said in support and added: "If possible it would be good to carry out Operation Overlord in May, say the 10th, 15th, or 20th of May."

"I cannot undertake such an obligation," Churchill replied.

Stalin shrugged his shoulders, indicating that he considered it hard to continue the conversation under such circumstances. He was clearly irritated by the evasive attitude of the British Prime Minister. But he retained his self-control and said in the calm tone of a teacher who is trying to explain the essence of a question to a slow-witted child:

"If Overlord is carried out in August, as Churchill said yesterday, nothing will come of the operation because of the unfavourable weather in that period. April and May are the best months for Overlord."

Stalin was occasionally irritable. The slightest objection could provoke a stormy reaction. However, throughout work at the Teheran Conference, he controlled himself well. He was restrained and correct even at the most critical moments. In this sense he differed favourably from Churchill, who frequently lost his temper, was very nervous and sometimes completely incapable of controlling himself.

Stalin's calm tone had its effect.

"I do not think," Churchill said in a conciliatory way, "that we differ in our views, as it may seem. I am prepared to do everything that is within the power of the British Government to carry out Operation Overlord at the earliest possible date. But I do not think that the many possibilities available in the Mediterranean should be coldly rejected as being of no importance, just because their use will hold up Operation Overlord for two or three months. . . In our opinion the numerous British troops must not be idle for six months. They should carry on operations against the enemy, and with the help of our American allies we hope to destroy the German divisions in Italy. We cannot remain passive in Italy, for that will spoil our whole campaign there. We must extend assistance to our Russian friends."

Thus Churchill once again returned to his idea of launching operations in the Mediterranean and, moreover, making it out that this would be the best assistance to the Soviet Union. Stalin remarked sarcastically:

"According to Churchill it would appear that the Russians want the British to be idle."

Churchill pretended not to notice the irony, and began to argue yet again about the necessity of tying down the greatest number of German divisions in Italy and the Balkans and that passivity on the front in Italy would allow the Germans to transfer their divisions back to France to the prejudice of Overlord. Churchill declared that the British were always ready to discuss all details with the Allies, but that everything depended on the availability of landing facilities. If these landing facilities were to be left in the Mediterranean or in the Indian Ocean to the prejudice of Overlord, then neither the success of Overlord nor that of the operation in Southern France could be guaranteed.

"The operations in Southern France will require a great quantity of landing facilities. I ask this to be taken into consideration," concluded Churchill significantly.

In this situation, the suggestion of conducting further discussion in a commission of military specialists looked like a device aimed at burying this matter completely, for everyone knew that the time the three leaders could give to the Teheran Conference was altogether limited.

So, when Roosevelt again proposed entrusting the remaining unsolved problems to a military committee, Stalin objected strongly:

"There is no need for any military committee. We can solve all the questions here at the conference. We must decide on the date, the commander-in-chief and the need of an auxiliary operation in Southern France."

The Soviet representative added that the Soviet delegation was limited in time to stay at Teheran. The delegation could stay on until December 1 but would have to leave on the 2nd. After all, it had been agreed beforehand that the conference was to last three or four days.

All the same Roosevelt continued to insist on letting a military committee deal with all problems, but Stalin would not agree. He explained that the Russians wanted to know the date on which Operation Overlord was to start in order to prepare their blow at the Germans.

Churchill supported the President's proposal for a military committee.

"As for determining the date of Operation Overlord," he remarked, "if it is decided to have an examination of strategic questions in the military committee. . ."

"We are not demanding any examination," Stalin abruptly interrupted Churchill.

Sensing that the atmosphere was getting hot, Roosevelt hastily intervened.

"We are all aware that the contradictions between us and the British are small. I object to the postponement of Operation Overlord, while Churchill lays emphasis on the importance of operations in the Mediterranean. The military committee could clear up these questions."

"We can solve these problems ourselves," Stalin insisted again, "because we have more rights than the military committee. If I may permit myself an incautious question, I should like to know whether the British believe in Operation Overlord or simply speak of it to reassure the Russians."

Churchill took the bit between his teeth.

"Given the conditions which were indicated at the Moscow Conference," he said evasively, "I am quite sure that we shall have to transfer all our available forces against the Germans when Operation Overlord is launched."

The terms which Churchill was referring to were determined at the Moscow Conference of the three powers which took place not long before the meeting in Teheran. They determined in which circumstances the landing across the Channel would be successful: at the moment of invasion, there had to be no more than 12 German mobile divisions in France, and for a period of 60 days the Germans were not to gain the opportunity of transferring more than 15 divisions to France to replenish their forces.

Churchill made it clear by mentioning these terms, that under certain circumstances, Operation Overlord could well be put in doubt. All in all, after lengthy debate, the problem of Operation Overlord was once again in deadlock. It seemed pointless to continue negotiations.

Stalin suddenly got to his feet and, turning to Molotov and Voroshilov, said:

"Come on, let's not waste our time here. We've got plenty to do at the front."

Churchill began to fidget in his arm-chair, turned red and muttered something indistinctly about being misunderstood.

In order to relieve the tense atmosphere, Roosevelt said in a conciliatory tone:

"We are very hungry now, and I propose that we adjourn to attend the dinner given for us today by Marshal Stalin."

A Nazi Spy in the British Embassy

The Teheran Decisions and "Cicero"

When the three leaders met the next day at luncheon, Roosevelt's elated mood was immediately visible. A smile twinkled in his eyes and he looked very cheerful. Addressing those present, he said with emphasised solemnity:

"Gentlemen, I am happy to inform Marshal Stalin of some pleasant news. Today our Joint Staffs with the participation of the British Prime Minister and the American President, adopted the following proposal: 'Operation Overlord is planned for May 1944, and will be conducted with the support of a landing in Southern France. The strength of this auxiliary operation will depend on the quantity of landing facilities available at the time.'"

Outwardly, the Soviet representatives received this announcement calmly. But I think that inwardly we all experienced a profound excitement: the answer which the Soviet delegation had so persistently worked for had finally been received. And though the realisation of this commitment was still a long way off, it seemed as if the mere fact of obtaining this answer somehow removed part of the heavy burden lying on the Soviet people and would give new strength to those fighting against fascism. I was seized by a feeling of elation, a lump rose in my throat and I was barely able to keep myself from applauding. Stalin's excitement manifested itself only in an unusual paleness and in his voice, which became even lower when, inclining his head a little, he uttered:

"I am satisfied with this decision."

Everyone was silent for a few moments. Then Churchill said

that the precise date of the launching of the operation would, obviously, depend on the phase of the moon. Stalin remarked that, of course, he did not demand to be told a precise date and that, naturally, one or two weeks in May would be needed for this manoeuvre. He said:

"I would like to inform Churchill and Roosevelt that the Russians will prepare a strong offensive against the Nazis for the moment the landing operations in France begin."

Roosevelt thanked Stalin for this decision, pointing out that this would not allow the Germans to transfer their troops to the West.

Thus the discussion of the question of opening a second front in Northern France came to an end.

The commitments given then by the Americans and British were, as we know, revised yet again with the purpose of delay: Operation Overlord began not in May, but on June 6, 1944. It is possible that it might have been postponed even further had it not been for the successful operations of the Soviet troops, which pushed the Nazis back to the West and were already approaching German territory. The British and Americans were afraid of being late and so finally carried out the invasion.

For its part, the Soviet command timed a big offensive of the Red Army on German positions to coincide with Operation Overlord. On June 6, 1944, as soon as he had received information from London on the successes of the launching of Overlord, Stalin sent Churchill and Roosevelt identical telegrams saying: "The summer offensive of the Soviet troops to be launched in keeping with the agreement reached at the Tehran Conference, will begin in mid-June in one of the vital sectors of the front. The general offensive will develop by stages, through consecutive engagement of the armies in offensive operations. Between late June and the end of July the operations will turn into a general offensive of the Soviet troops."¹

The Soviet Union fully carried out its commitment to the Allies. . .

After the question of Overlord had been solved, the conference participants gave considerable attention to the problem of maintaining the achieved understanding in strict secrecy. Churchill

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. I, p. 224, Vol. II, p. 145.

pointed out that in any event the enemy would soon learn of the Allies' preparations, being able to discover them by the great accumulation of trains, by the activity of ports, etc.

Churchill proposed that the Allies' staffs begin to think how to camouflage the preparations and mislead the enemy.

In this connection, Stalin gave an idea of Soviet experience. He told of how in similar cases the Soviet army misled the enemy by building dummies of tanks, planes and mock airfields. Then these dummies were set in motion with the aid of tractors, and the enemy intelligence reported these movements to their commanders and the Germans thought that the blow was being prepared in that very place. In several places up to 5,000 or 8,000 dummies of tanks were set up, as well as up to 2,000 dummies of planes and a large number of dummy airfields. In addition, the enemy was misled with the aid of the radio. In the areas where no offensive was planned radio stations exchanged messages. These were monitored by the enemy who got the impression that a great force was deployed there. Enemy planes often bombed these places night and day although they were absolutely empty. Meanwhile, there was complete calm in the areas where an offensive was really being staged. All transportation took place at night.

Having listened to this explanation, Churchill declared haughtily:

"Sometimes truth has to be protected by bodyguards of lies."

Then he added in a more business-like tone:

"In any case, steps will be taken to mislead the enemy."

The conference participants agreed that the circle of people to know of the decisions adopted at the Teheran Conference should be as limited as possible and that additional measures would be taken in order to exclude the possibility of information leakage.

Such measures were taken by the Soviet side. It was even proposed that we did not dictate the content of the latest talks as usual, but rather take hand-written notes of the precise dates of the invasion and other decisions in order to make up protocols in Moscow. For the purposes of precaution, we were also to give these manuscript accounts of the Teheran decisions into the diplomatic bag. They were packed into special thick, black enve-

lopes, placed in canvas bags and stamped with numerous seals, and they were delivered to Moscow by armed diplomatic couriers. One must assume that similar measures were taken by the British and the Americans. But even so the vital decisions of the Teheran Conference were not kept secret from the enemy.

After the war it became known that Anthony Eden, on his return to London from Teheran, informed in detail the British ambassador in Ankara, Sir Hugh Knatchbull-Hugessen, of the conference decisions. The coded telegrams contained not only information about the negotiations, which concerned Turkey, and which would have been natural, but also information on other vital issues, including the dates for Overlord. All this information fell into Nazi hands via the German paid agent Elyasa Bazna, Sir Hugh's valet. Bazna, who earned the nickname Cicero for the abundance of vital material that he gave the SS Secret Service, regularly photographed secret dispatches that came to the British ambassador and handed them over to the SS agent in Ankara, Moyzisch. Sir Hugh showed extraordinary carelessness, frequently leaving his black briefcase with documents in his bedroom unguarded. Thus the secret telegrams easily fell into Cicero's hands.

In his memoirs published in 1950, Moyzisch writes how after spending a whole night in a photographic darkroom developing films received from Cicero, he discovered that he was holding the protocols from the Cairo and Teheran conferences. Bazna also recalls this in his book, published somewhat later. He writes that from the documents that he photographed for the Germans one could "discern the intentions of the British, Americans and Russians".¹

The German ambassador to Turkey during the war, von Papen, wrote:

"Cicero's information was immensely valuable for two reasons. A résumé of the decisions taken at the Teheran Conference was sent to the British ambassador. This revealed the Allies' intentions concerning the political treatment of Germany after her defeat, and showed us where the differences between the Allies lay. But what was of even greater and more immediate impor-

¹ See: Elyasa Bazna, *I Was Cicero*, New York, Harpers & Row, 1962.

tance was the intimate knowledge it gave us of the enemy's operational plans."¹

However, judging by everything, the Nazi leaders did not make full use of this priceless information. On the one hand, they continued to doubt whether these documents had not been planted on them by the British in order to misinform them. And, on the other, realising the importance of the information obtained from Cicero, they were afraid of widening the circle of those in-the-know. Therefore the leaders of the German Wehrmacht evidently made no use whatsoever of these documents in their operational plans, and perhaps even knew nothing of them. In any case, the Anglo-American invasion of Normandy, which took place at dawn on June 6, 1944, came as a complete surprise to the German command.

Not even Cicero himself benefited from this operation: the 300,000 pounds sterling which the Nazis paid him turned out to be fake.

Following the publication of Moyzisch's memoirs, an enquiry was made in the British parliament as to the leakage to the Germans during the war of top secret information from the British embassy in Ankara. London officially confirmed that the Nazis had received top secret documents, including the highly important decisions of the Teheran Conference.

A Birthday Cake

The guests began to gather just after eight at the reception given by the British embassy in the evening of November 30 on the occasion of Churchill's 69th birthday. Stalin, accompanied by Molotov and Voroshilov, was in his marshal's uniform. He congratulated Churchill and presented him with an astrakhan hat and a large china sculpture on a theme based on Russian folk-tales. Roosevelt appeared in a dress-coat holding his gifts: an antique Persian bowl and an Isfahan rug.

Standing motionless and silent on both sides of the main doors, through which the guests entered, were bearded Indian soldiers in huge turbans.

It had been a hot day, but by evening a pleasant coolness had

¹ Franz von Papen, *Memoirs*, Andre Deutsch, London, 1952, p. 517.

come from the old park. By the time we arrived the room had already filled with a brilliant crowd: officers were parading around in their gold-embroidered uniforms, rivalled by diplomats in their dress-coats and snow-white shirtfronts. The only lady present was Churchill's daughter, Sarah Churchill-Oliver. She stood beside the beaming birthday host, responding to the greetings and congratulations addressed to Churchill, rather in the way a circus performer's partner bows with particular zest to applause. Meanwhile, Churchill himself smiled cheerfully and puffed away happily at his cigar.

Soon everyone moved from the hall into the dining-room where the long tables were laid with all kinds of food. On the main table towered a vast birthday cake with 69 burning candles.

Pronouncing the first toast, Stalin said:

"My fighting friend Churchill!"

Stalin went over to him, clinked glasses, hugged him by the shoulder and shook his hand. When everyone had drained his glass, he addressed the President of the United States in the same words:

"My fighting friend Roosevelt!"

The same procedure of clinking glasses and hand-shaking was repeated.

Churchill changed his toast slightly, announcing:

"Stalin the mighty! Roosevelt the President, my friend!"

Then Roosevelt turned to Churchill and Stalin and said:

"To our unity—war and peace!"

Churchill liked the Russian custom of proposing toasts and so did the Americans. In the end, the guests spent much time on their feet, because the toasts followed one after another, and after each speech everyone rose from his seat. Moreover, Churchill adopted Stalin's manner of going up to each person to whom a toast had been said to clink glasses with him. So, there were the two of them, wandering slowly around the room with glasses in their hands. Everyone was in high spirits and it became hot and noisy in the hall.

However trivial the toasts were, it seemed that each toaster put his own special sense into them.

Even here, as he had done in the conference hall, Roosevelt considered it essential to speak of the post-war world and the importance of maintaining the unity and cooperation of the great

powers not just then, but in the future also. Here, at Churchill's birthday table, it seemed that the tasks of fighting against the common enemy and conquering it, which had brought these people to the Iranian capital at the height of the terrible war had, as it were, created a new atmosphere in their personal relations and in the relations between their countries. It was as if one large family had gathered in the hall and will be united forever. But this feeling did not last long. It was shattered by the Chief of Imperial General Staff, General Alan Brooke.

Indicating that he wished to propose a toast—usually each person would tap his knife against his glass—Brooke rose from his seat and began to comment on which of the Allies had suffered most in the war. He declared that the British had suffered more in the war than any other, had lost more, had fought more, had done more to win the war.

An awkward silence set in in the hall. The majority, naturally, sensed the tactlessness of General Brooke's words. After all, everyone knew that the bulk of Hitler's forces was concentrated on the Soviet-German front, and that the Red Army was liberating step by step the occupied Soviet territory, turned to ashes by the Nazis, at the cost of unbelievable sacrifice and effort. Stalin became gloomy. He got to his feet at once and glanced severely round those present. It looked as though a storm was about to burst. But, controlling himself, he said calmly:

"I want to tell you, from the Soviet point of view, what the President and the United States have done to win the war. The most important things in this war are machines. The United States has proven that it can turn out from eight to ten thousand airplanes a month. England turns out three thousand a month, principally heavy bombers. The United States, therefore, is a country of machines. Those machines, received through Lend-Lease, help us to win the war. I would like to propose a toast to this."

Roosevelt immediately answered that he valued the power of the Red Army very highly. Soviet forces, he said, were using not only American and British military machines, but excellent Soviet machines as well. He remarked that while they were all celebrating Churchill's birthday, the Red Army was rolling the Nazi war machine steadily back to Germany. He proposed a toast to Soviet weapons.

The incident was settled, but the relaxed atmosphere which had reigned earlier in the evening vanished.

Plans for the Post-War Peaceful Settlement

The Argument over War Criminals

I would like to tell of one unofficial meeting at which a serious conflict took place between the Soviet and the British representatives. It occurred at a dinner of the three leaders and their closest associates which was very peaceful at first. There was an abundance of toasts: to the health of those taking part in the conference, to the success of various forces, to victory over the common enemy and to post-war cooperation. Some specifically political toasts were also proposed. For instance, someone from the Soviet delegation made the following toast:

"I wish to propose a toast to your future deliveries of Lend-Lease matériel which I am sure will arrive on time in the future, and will not be arriving late, as have shipments to date!"¹

Towards the end of the meal Stalin rose to his feet and began to speak of Nazi war criminals.

"I propose a salute," he said, "to the swiftest possible justice for all Germany's war criminals. . . I drink to our unity in dispatching them as fast as we capture them, all of them, and there must be quite a few of them."

The translation into English had barely finished when Churchill leapt to his feet as if he had been stung. Previously he had conscientiously drained his glass of brandy after each toast, and was already considerably under the influence. The Prime Minister pushed back his glass with a sharp movement and knocked it over, spreading a large yellow brandy stain over the tablecloth. Churchill was so inflamed that he did not even notice this. His face and neck went purple and his eyes were bloodshot. Waving his arms in agitation, he cried:

"Any such attitude is wholly contrary to our British sense of justice! The British people will never stand for such mass murder.

¹ E. Roosevelt, *Op. cit.*, p. 187.

I take this opportunity to say that I feel most strongly that no one, Nazi or no, shall be summarily dealt with, before a firing squad, without proper legal trial, no matter what the known facts and proven evidence against him!"¹

Everyone looked in Stalin's direction. He reacted perfectly calmly to the British Prime Minister's angry speech. Churchill's agitation even seemed to amuse him. There was a twinkle in his eyes.

Stalin coolly began to refute Churchill's arguments thoroughly, which only made the latter even more furious. The Soviet representative stressed that no one was going to punish Nazi criminals without trial. The case of each individual had to be carefully investigated. But already it was evident from the mass atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis that there must be tens of thousands of criminals among them, concluded Stalin. Then, turning to Roosevelt who was silently observing this scene, he asked for his opinion.

"As usual," said the President, "it seems to be my function to mediate this dispute. Clearly there must be some sort of compromise between your position, Mr. Stalin, and that of my good friend the Prime Minister."²

The Soviet and American delegates appreciated the President's answer and burst out laughing. But the British sat in silence, looking sullenly at their leader. Churchill sat down in his armchair, but one could sense that he was still boiling with fury.

"Let's brush it off," said Hopkins. "We're still miles and miles and months and months away from Germany and conquest of the Nazis."

But Stalin continued to ask all those present for their opinions. Finally, he turned to Elliott Roosevelt who was also present at the meal. He rose rather embarrassed, but said quite firmly:

"Isn't the whole thing pretty academic? Look: when our armies start rolling in from the west, and your armies are still coming on from the east, we'll be solving the whole thing, won't we? Russian, American, and British soldiers will settle the issue for most of those fifty thousand [war criminals—*Ed.*] in battle."³

¹ E. Roosevelt, *Op. cit.*, pp. 188-90.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

Stalin liked this answer. Walking round the table, glass in hand, he stopped beside Elliott, flung an arm around his shoulder and said smiling:

"An excellent answer! I propose a toast to your health, Elliott!"

At this point Churchill exploded once again. Waving an angry finger across the table at Elliott, he roared:

"Are you interested in damaging relations between the Allies? Do you know what you are saying? How can you dare say such a thing?"¹

Elliott plopped into his arm-chair in confusion and covered his face with his hands so amusingly that everyone present burst out laughing. The tension was relieved.

Soon we all moved into the next room for coffee. But that evening Churchill did not approach the Soviet delegates. His gloomy face was covered with red patches and he puffed away harder than ever at his cigar.

Churchill's violent reaction to the proposition to punish severely Nazi war criminals was not fortuitous. In itself this demand could not have been of any surprise to the British Prime Minister. He had, after all, signed the Declaration of the heads of government of the three powers of the anti-Hitler coalition, which had been published on November 2, 1943, during the meeting in Moscow of the three countries' Foreign Ministers.

In the Declaration on German Atrocities, which was also signed by Roosevelt and Stalin, it was stated:

"...Germans who take part in wholesale shooting of Italian officers or in execution of Dutch, Belgian, or Norwegian hostages, Cretan peasants, or who have shared in the slaughters of the people of Poland or in territories of the Soviet Union which are now being swept clear of the enemy, will know they will be brought back to the scene of their crimes and judged on the spot by the peoples whom they have outraged. Let those who have hitherto not imbrued their hands with innocent blood beware lest they join the ranks of the guilty, for most assuredly the three Allied Powers will pursue them to the uttermost ends of the earth and will deliver them to their accusers in order that justice may be done."

It would appear that after such a declaration, the suggestion

¹ *Ibid.*

to punish severely Nazi war criminals could not provoke objection. After all it was not a question of vengeance with regard to the innocent, but of punishment of the Nazi war criminals. But evidently Churchill regarded the Declaration of the Three Powers merely as a propaganda gesture and felt quite differently in fact. As the Soviet forces advanced further to the west and nearer to the territory of the Third Reich, Churchill was beginning to wonder how to use the Nazi criminals to achieve the plan, already playing in his head, of creating a new *cor-don sanitaire* around the Soviet Union.

The Anglo-American Plan for the Partitioning of Germany

It was still a long way from the Teheran Conference to the victory over Nazi Germany. The Soviet armies had yet to cover hundreds of miles of fierce battles, force major rivers and take many towns by storm. And many thousands of Soviet, American and British soldiers and Resistance fighters were to give their lives in this titanic combat. Ahead were fierce battles on the Eastern Front, the landing in Normandy, the bloody fighting in the Ardennes and the liberation of France and other Nazi-occupied countries.

Everybody in Teheran realised that it was still a long time till that moment when the Allied forces would cross the German borders from the north, south, east and west to launch the final assault on the enemy. But nobody doubted that this moment would come. Everyone was convinced of the final victory of the anti-Hitler coalition.

Therefore it was quite natural that the question arose at the Teheran Conference of how the Allies should deal with Germany after the war. Everyone agreed that the Axis powers would have to surrender unconditionally. But measures had to be taken in order to prevent Germany, which twice in the lifetime of one generation had plunged humanity into a world war, from ever unleashing a new aggression again.

This matter was discussed first after a late dinner on November 28. The day had been rather difficult and Roosevelt, who looked tired, excused himself and went straight to his rooms

after the dinner. Churchill, Stalin, Eden and Molotov moved into the next room where they were served coffee.

Churchill lit up a cigar and remarked that the Allies should deal Germany such a crushing blow that she would never be able to threaten other peoples again. Stalin agreed, but added that unless special measures were taken, Germany would soon restore her potential and once again present a threat to the world. Churchill disagreed with this viewpoint. He said that Germany's human reserves and military-industrial potential were already considerably drained owing to huge losses on the Soviet front and also to the bombings to which the Allies were subjecting the country. And towards the end of the war Germany would be dealt such blows and be so ruined that she would be unable to restore herself rapidly.

"I see you are a great optimist," Stalin smiled. Placing his unfinished cup of coffee down on a small table, he wiped his moustache with a white handkerchief and added more seriously: "Unfortunately I cannot share your optimism. The specific conditions of Germany, with her Junkers and major military concerns, are such that she can present a threat to the world again and again. But we, of course, could try to change these conditions."

Sensing that Stalin had touched on the question of the social system of post-war Germany, Churchill abruptly changed the topic of conversation. That evening the German question was not mentioned any more.

When Stalin met Roosevelt alone the next day, he told him of the conversation with Churchill.

"When you had gone," said Stalin, "I had a talk with Churchill on the maintenance of peace in the future. Churchill regards this matter very lightly. He believes that Germany could not rehabilitate herself rapidly. I disagree and feel that this could happen soon. She would need a mere 15-20 years. If nothing is done to restrain Germany, I fear that she will soon be able to regain her strength. The first big war begun by Germany in 1870 ended in 1871. After only 42 years, that is in 1914, the Germans began a new war, and again after 21 years, in 1939, they began another. As we can see, the period required for Germany's rehabilitation, is decreasing. And it will obviously decrease still further in the future."

Roosevelt listened without interrupting. He was attracted by Stalin's reasoning. Only occasionally he nodded in agreement and lightly tapped the fingers of his right hand on the arm of his wheel-chair.

Meanwhile, Stalin continued saying how difficult it would be to prevent Germany from ever becoming a threat to other peoples again. Whatever bans we could impose, he said, the Germans would be able to get round them. Whereas the construction of planes could be prohibited, furniture factories could not be closed down, and it is well known that furniture factories can be rapidly regeared to produce planes. Likewise, it can be prohibited to Germany to produce shells and torpedoes, but watch-making factories cannot be closed, and every clock factory can easily be transformed to produce the most vital parts for both shells and torpedoes.

Thus, Germany can be rehabilitated again and once more start aggression.

On this occasion Stalin did not mention the social conditions of Germany. Possibly Churchill's sharp reaction had prompted him that he could meet only opposition from the British and the Americans over the issue of the social structure of Germany. In any case, now he spoke merely of strategic measures that could help the Allies to keep defeated Germany within definite limits.

"The planned bodies will not be enough to prevent aggression," Stalin said, explaining himself. "We must have the opportunity of occupying the most vital strategic points, so that Germany could not seize them. Such points need to be occupied not just in Europe, but also in the Far East, to prevent Japan from launching new aggression. A special body should be set up which would have the right to occupy strategically important points. In case of a threat of aggression from either Germany or Japan, these points ought to be occupied immediately in order to surround Germany and Japan and suppress them."

"I agree with you one hundred per cent," said Roosevelt. "I can be just as firm as Marshal Stalin. Of course, the Germans could regear their factories for military production but in such a case it would be essential to act promptly, and if decisive measures are taken, then Germany would not have sufficient time to rearm."

"In that case everything is guaranteed," smiled Stalin.

The conference participants returned to the question of Germany during the plenary meeting on December 1. Roosevelt said that there was a suggestion for Germany to be partitioned, and this issue needed to be discussed in greater detail.

Churchill took up after the President had finished. Evidently, he was prepared for the way this question was raised. He supported Roosevelt vigorously.

"I am for partitioning Germany. But I should like to consider the question of partitioning Prussia. I am for separating Bavaria and the other provinces from Germany."

Churchill's proposal sounded rather unexpected, and there was a silence in the hall. Then Roosevelt spoke:

"In order to stimulate our discussion on this question," he said, "I want to set forth a plan for partitioning Germany into five states, which I personally drew up two months ago."

"I should like to stress," interrupted Churchill, "that the root of evil in Germany is Prussia."

Roosevelt nodded in approval and continued:

"I should like us to have a picture of the whole before we speak of the separate components. In my opinion, Prussia must be weakened as far as possible, and reduced in size. Prussia should constitute the first independent part of Germany. The second part of Germany should include Hannover and the north-western regions of Germany. The third part—Saxony and the Leipzig area. The fourth part—Hessen Province, Darmstadt, Kassel and the areas to the south of the Rhine, and also the old towns of Westphalia. The fifth part—Bavaria, Baden, Württemberg. Each of these five parts would be an independent state. In addition, the regions of the Kiel Canal and Hamburg should be separated from Germany. These regions would be administered by the United Nations, or the four Powers. The Ruhr and the Saar must be placed either under the control of the United Nations or under the trusteeship of the whole of Europe. That is my proposal. I must add that it is merely exploratory."

In the situation prevailing at that time, with almost the whole of Europe occupied by the Nazis, Roosevelt's proposal for the partitioning of Germany sounded rather unrealistic. Moreover, the doubt emerged at once as to whether in the 20th century

the German people could be forced to accept the rebirth of the dwarf states of the Electors' period. It did seem that the American President's decision to recarve the map of Germany was too bold.

But Churchill, that cunning and experienced politician, seemed to support Roosevelt's idea.

"You have said a mouthful. I think there are two questions: one—destructive, the other—constructive. I have two ideas: the first is to isolate Prussia from the rest of Germany; the second is to separate Germany's southern provinces—Bavaria, Baden, Württemberg, the Palatinate, from the Saar to Saxony inclusive. I would keep Prussia in strict conditions. I think it would be easy to sever the southern provinces from Prussia and include them in a Danubian federation. The people who live in the Danube Basin are not the cause of war. At any rate, I would give the Prussians harsher treatment than the other Germans. The southern Germans will not start a new war."

Churchill's arguments introduced a new element into the question of Germany's future. While advocating the partitioning of Germany and the suppression of Prussia, he was at the same time aiming at creating a new formation, similar to the patchwork Hapsburg monarchy. It was thus that one could interpret his words about a Danubian federation. It goes without saying that such federation, as conceived by the British Prime Minister, could be controlled by the Western powers and would isolate the Soviet Union from Western Europe. This plan obviously had something in common with Churchill's own idea of an Anglo-American landing in the Balkans with the aim of forestalling the Russians in South-east Europe.

Stalin firmly opposed this plan.

"I do not like the plan for new associations of states," he said icily. "If it is decided to partition Germany no new associations need be set up. Whether it is five or six states, and two regions into which Roosevelt proposes to divide Germany, this plan of Roosevelt's . . . can be examined. Like us, Churchill will soon have to deal with great masses of Germans. Churchill will then see that it is not only the Prussians who are fighting in the German Army but also Germans from the other provinces of Germany. Only the Austrians, when surrendering, shout 'I'm Austrian!', and our soldiers accept them. As for the Germans from

Germany's other provinces they fight with equal doggedness. Regardless of how we approach the partitioning of Germany there is no need to set up some new association of Danubian states lacking vitality. Hungary and Austria must exist separately. Austria existed as a separate state until it was seized."

Roosevelt agreed with Stalin that there was no difference between Germans from the various provinces of Germany. Fifty years previously there had been a difference, pointed out the President, but now all German soldiers were alike.

After this Churchill again spoke.

"I should not like to be understood as not favouring the partition of Germany," he said. "But I wanted to say that if Germany is broken up into several parts without these parts being combined then, as Marshal Stalin said, the time will come when the Germans will unite."

"There are no steps that could exclude the possibility of Germany's unification," objected the head of the Soviet delegation.

"Does Marshal Stalin prefer a divided Europe?" asked Churchill caustically.

"Europe has nothing to do with it," parried Stalin. "I don't know that there is need to set up four, five or six independent German states. This question must be discussed."

Roosevelt enquired whether a special committee should be set up to study the question of Germany or whether, perhaps, it should be referred to the London Commission of representatives of the three powers. Stalin agreed with the latter suggestion.

This issue was raised again by the Western powers at the Yalta Conference in February 1945. But there, too, their idea for the partition of Germany did not meet with support from the Soviet side. The Soviet delegate in the tripartite commission voted down the American and British proposal for the partitioning of Germany. Meanwhile, the position of the Soviet Government on this question was clearly defined. Speaking on May 9, 1945, Victory Day, the head of the Soviet Government declared that the Soviet Union "neither intended to partition, nor to destroy Germany".

Western propagandists have a liking for playing a false card, asserting that the Soviet Union was responsible for the splitting of Germany. This is malicious invention. On the contrary, it

was owing to the principled stand adopted by the Soviet Government that the Anglo-American plans for the partitioning of Germany, first put forward at the Teheran Conference, were not realised.

At the Potsdam Conference of the three powers, which took place in the summer of 1945, important decisions were taken on the denazification, democratisation and demilitarisation of Germany as a single whole. If these decisions had been implemented in full, Germany would now have existed as a single state. But the Potsdam decisions were not implemented in the western zones of occupation, and failing to achieve the partitioning of Germany, the Western powers divided the country without preliminary permission or agreement. The process of remilitarisation began in West Germany. The military monopolies again began to gain in strength. The so-called "bizone" and "trizone" were established. Finally, the Federal Republic of Germany was proclaimed, in which militarism and revanchism had since blossomed.

In these conditions, the democratic forces of the German people in the east of the country created a workers' and peasants' state, the German Democratic Republic.

Thus appeared the two German states which today travel along two different historical paths.

Post-War Settlement

The participants in the Teheran Conference only touched in general terms on the problem of post-war settlement. Despite the contrasting interests of the powers taking part in the conference, even at that stage in the war, attempts were made to find a common language with regard to the maintenance of peace after the victory of the anti-Hitler coalition. The leaders of Western powers saw that the peoples of the whole world, who had made enormous efforts to defeat fascism and to save humanity from the threat of enslavement, were deeply interested in preventing the repetition of a world holocaust. These sentiments of the broad public exerted strong pressure on the leaders of capitalist states then fighting against the Axis powers. Roosevelt was particularly sensitive to this pressure. He undoubtedly thought a great deal about the future arrangement of the world.

In a conversation with Stalin on November 29, Roosevelt said that he wanted to talk about the future arrangement of the world before leaving Teheran. In the American President's opinion, an organisation should be set up which would really guarantee lasting peace after the war. Getting a positive response from the Soviet side, Roosevelt explained that he imagined that after the end of the war a universal organisation would have to be established based along the lines of the United Nations. This organisation would not deal with military questions. It should not be like the League of Nations. It would include 35 or maybe 50 United Nations, and would merely give recommendations. This organisation would have no other power.

Roosevelt expressed the opinion that such an organisation should meet not in one fixed place but in different places. Asked whether it would be a European or a world organisation, Roosevelt replied that it should be a world organisation.

Stalin enquired who was to make up the executive body of this organisation. Roosevelt answered that he supposed the executive committee should include the Soviet Union, Great Britain, the United States, China, two European countries, one South American, one country from the Middle East, one from Asia (besides China) and one British dominion. He said that Churchill disagreed with this last point since it would mean that the British would only have two voices—from Britain and from one of her dominions. Roosevelt then suggested that the executive committee deal with agricultural, food and economic issues, as well as questions of health.

Roosevelt considered that there ought also to be a police committee, consisting of countries that would make sure that peace was maintained and that no new aggression came from Germany.

The Soviet delegation put forward no specific proposals at the Teheran Conference on the question of post-war settlement. In his talk with Roosevelt, Stalin limited himself to asking questions to clarify some issues and voicing only very general ideas about them.

Roosevelt's remark about the "danger of revolution" as "a violation of peace" was highly indicative, as was the proposal to set up a "quarantine" for those countries in which a revolutionary situation had arisen, or even to occupy such a country. Undoubtedly, the American President was reflecting here the attitude of

certain Anglo-American quarters who feared that the triumphant anti-fascist war might lead to the upsurge of revolutionary forces and to the intensification of the struggle of peoples for social change.

Stalin ignored all these remarks made by Roosevelt, and it seems to me that he did so on purpose.

As we know, on the eve of the war and in the course of it Western propaganda never tired of alleging that the Soviet Union was pursuing the aim of a "world revolution" and was intent on "exporting revolution" to other countries. This propaganda campaign, encouraged by Goebbels' department, aimed to drive a wedge between the Allies, provoke suspicion and complicate the struggle against Nazi Germany. Realising all this, Stalin was trying not to give any grounds for such incriminations or suspicion.

"The Big Three" Leave Teheran

The morning of December 2 was dull and grey. It had suddenly turned cold. Gusts of wind were swirling the yellow leaves round the park. At the entrance to the main building of the Soviet Embassy stood three military jeeps. American detectives were scurrying around, their jackets bulging with the automatic pistols hidden under their arms. Everything was ready for the departure of the President of the United States.

It had been agreed at first that the conference would have lasted till the end of December 2nd. But snow which had suddenly fallen in the mountains had caused a sharp worsening of the weather conditions and Roosevelt was forced to depart ahead of time. Late in the evening of December 1st the final declaration was hastily agreed upon. There was no time for typing clean copies of its text in Russian and English or for an official ceremony of its signing. The signatures to this document had to be collected rather in the fashion of an enquiry. Each of the main conference participants hastily put his visa. We were left with a fairly crumpled sheet of paper with the signatures done in pencil. The external appearance of the paper did not correspond to the solemn content of this document, soon to become world famous as the Teheran Declaration of the Three Powers. Here is what it said:

"We—the President of the United States, the Prime Minister

of Great Britain, and the Premier of the Soviet Union, have met these four days past, in this, the capital of our ally, Iran, and have shaped and confirmed our common policy.

We express our determination that our nations shall work together in war and in the peace that will follow.

As to war—our military staffs have joined in our round table discussions, and we have concerted our plans for the destruction of the German forces. We have reached complete agreement as to the scope and timing of the operations which will be undertaken from the East, West and South.

The common understanding which we have here reached guarantees that victory will be ours.

And as to peace—we are sure that our concord will make it an enduring peace. We recognise fully the supreme responsibility resting upon us and all the United Nations, to make a peace which will command the good will of the overwhelming mass of the peoples of the world, and banish the scourge and terror of war for many generations.

With our diplomatic advisers we have surveyed the problems of the future. We shall seek the co-operation, and the active participation of all nations, large and small, whose peoples in heart and mind are dedicated, as are our own peoples, to the elimination of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance. We will welcome them, as they may choose to come, into a world family of democratic nations.

No power on earth can prevent our destroying the German armies by land, their U-boats by sea, and their war planes from the air.

Our attack will be relentless and increasing.

Emerging from these friendly conferences we look with confidence to the day when all peoples of the world may live free lives, untouched by tyranny, and according to their varying desires and their own consciences.

We came here with hope and determination. We leave here, friends in fact, in spirit and in purpose.

Signed in Teheran,
on December 1, 1943

Roosevelt
Stalin
Churchill

Among the other decisions concerning the conduct of war, agreement was reached on granting comprehensive aid to the partisan movement in Yugoslavia.

A Declaration on Iran was also agreed upon by the three powers, guaranteeing the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran. The leaders of the three powers pledged themselves to provide Iran with possible economic aid both during and after the war.

...I stood opposite the wide, white-columned porch. There was a bustle of press photographers and cameramen, all trying to elbow their way nearer to the steps through the cordon of Soviet and American military guards, in order to be at the front. The door opened and the President appeared on the porch in his wheel-chair, accompanied by two Filipinos. A khaki-coloured waterproof was thrown across Roosevelt's shoulders, over his black cape that was fixed by a gold chain between two buckles shaped like lions' heads. An old-fashioned crumpled hat covered his head. His face was just like his portraits: the pince-nez, a cigarette in a long holder gripped in the wide, large-toothed smile. But the imprint of fatigue was on his face. The dreary morning particularly accentuated the President's unhealthy paleness. One could almost physically feel how difficult this very sick man was finding it to bear the burden resting on him. But his strength was supported by an indomitable will and inner energy.

Two hefty American sergeants went up to the wheel-chair, carried it up to the jeep and lifted Roosevelt into the front seat. His legs were covered with a tartan rug. By this time Stalin and Churchill had joined the group seeing the President off. Stalin approached the car, gave Roosevelt's hand a hearty shake and wished him a happy journey.

"I think we've done some great work here," said Roosevelt. "The agreed decisions will assure us victory."

"No one can doubt now that we shall win," answered Stalin, smiling.

Churchill also said good-bye to Roosevelt. The chauffeur started the engine and four detectives immediately leapt on to the running-boards of the jeep. Two of them pulled submachine-guns out of their jackets and lay on the front wings of the car. It looked as if the President's car was to burst through enemy

encirclement. It was the first time I saw how the American President's security was organised and it seemed to me that the deliberate demonstration put on by the detectives could only attract the attention of any malefactors. But Roosevelt evidently regarded this almost operetta-like performance as something quite normal. He smiled serenely and, when the jeep moved off, he raised his right hand and gave the victory sign. Soon the President's jeep disappeared behind the trees of the park.

Having said good-bye to the Soviet delegates, Churchill returned to his own embassy and soon left for the aerodrome.

The Soviet delegation left Teheran around midday. Several twin-engine passenger planes were waiting for us at the aerodrome. A group of officers went off in the first and Stalin left in the second plane. We waited until we were informed that he had landed safely in Baku, and then the rest of the planes took off one after another at short intervals.

When we left the plane in Baku, Stalin was still there. He was standing in front of the air terminal no longer in his marshal's uniform, but wearing an ordinary soldier's greatcoat and cap without any badges of rank. Next to him was the Airforce General Golovanov and some other officers. Before long a file of limousines appeared on the airfield. Stalin got into the second car next to the chauffeur, and his personal bodyguard sat in the back seat. The rest of us quickly got into the other cars and the cortege sped off into town to the railway station, where a special train, made up of large, long saloon-carriages was standing ready.

There was only one long stop on the way to Moscow, at Stalin-grad. We remained on the train, but Stalin and a few of his close associates went on a visit round the town. The train arrived in Moscow early in the morning of the fourth day. As soon as it stopped, Stalin got out of the carriage, into a black limousine parked right on the platform and left for the Kremlin.

Only on the following day, December 7, was a report printed in the Soviet press about the Teheran Conference of the leaders of the three powers, along with the texts of the Declaration and other official information.

Until that day no one in the Soviet Union, save a relatively small initiated group, knew that "the Big Three" had met in Teheran over a period of four days.

The results of the Teheran Conference demonstrate the fruitfulness of the military and political cooperation between the USSR, the USA and Great Britain during World War II. The conference decisions helped to unite and strengthen the anti-Hitler coalition. They could also have been of great significance for the development of fraternal Anglo-Soviet-American relations following the war. But, not long after the end of World War II the ruling quarters in the USA and Great Britain moved away from the agreed decisions and took the course of aggravating the international situation, a course towards a cold war.

The Teheran Conference was a tremendous success for Soviet foreign policy. Recalling now the discussions conducted in Teheran by the leaders of the three powers, and reading over the decisions taken there, one can see with particular clarity the historical significance of this meeting.

How the Teheran Decisions Were Carried Out

On the Threshold of 1944

An exultant mood prevailed in Moscow during the last month of 1943. There were many reasons for this. Confidence in our ultimate victory had grown. To be sure, heavy fighting continued in various sectors of the vast Soviet-German front, which stretched from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea. We all understood that enormous efforts were still to be made before Soviet territory would be rid of the aggressors and the liberation of the European nations enslaved by the Nazis could be begun. But the realisation that the initiative in the war had passed to the Red Army, which continued its irresistible advance to the west, gave added strength to Soviet fighting men and to those whose work lay in the rear.

Encouraging news came from the military theatres where our Allies were engaged. Their victories in Italy, at El Alamein, in the neighbourhood of Tunis, and on other fronts showed that there too the fortunes of war had turned away from Hitler's Germany and its satellites.

Finally, the decisions adopted in Teheran at the recently con-

cluded conference of the heads of state of the three great powers—Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill—had demonstrated the unity of the allies and their determination to bring the war to a swift conclusion and to deal the enemy a crushing defeat. But the first meeting of the heads of the three powers also brought out the difficulties and conflicts inevitable in a military alliance including states with different social systems, outlooks and ideologies.

Back in Moscow

After our return from Teheran we were quickly drawn once again into our customary working rhythm. V. N. Pavlov and I worked as assistants to the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, in the rank of counsellors, and thus were given an office of our own right beside Molotov's secretariat, in the Kremlin building that housed the Council of People's Commissars. To get to this room you went a little way down a corridor whose tall windows looked onto a small inner courtyard, triangular in shape and now sprinkled with snow. Its whiteness seemed particularly brilliant after the yellow-green halftones of late autumn in Iran. The courtyard was so small that through the identical tall windows on its opposite side we could see the officers of the Supreme Command General Headquarters bending over their field maps. Things were going well at the front, and as we looked at the officers we all felt curious and a little envious.

Our office held two desks, several chairs, a bookcase, and two big safes, the work of pre-revolutionary Moscow craftsmen. We listened to BBC broadcasts in order to broaden our knowledge of English idiomatic expressions and political terminology, and Pavlov supplied us with a Webster's, in two weighty volumes, which we perused in our spare moments to build our vocabularies. Around one o'clock each afternoon we would go over to the next building (where the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet is now located) to have tea and hot *piroshki* in the cafeteria of the Kremlin War College.

We also listened to German radio broadcasts. Things on the front were getting steadily worse for Nazi Germany, but Goebbels' propaganda was as boastful as ever. The growing alarm of Nazi top quarters could nonetheless be felt in the Führer's own speeches, which became more and more hysterical.

Work began for us at ten in the morning, and ended late at night—the exact hour depended on when Molotov went home. There was ordinarily a break for dinner between five and seven, but either Pavlov or I, by turns, remained in our office, since something unforeseen might always come up.

As before, my job was to make reports on American affairs, and thus I was brought into contact most of all with S. Tsarapkin, who at that time was head of the US department in the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. Pavlov continued to keep his eye on relations with Britain. And since Molotov's first deputy, Andrei Vyshinsky, was in charge of the US and British departments (among others), those papers which he directed to his superior that had to do with American or British matters usually passed through our hands. It was our task to see they were properly made up and to supply necessary facts and other documentation Molotov might need in deciding the question or making his report to Stalin, as was ordinarily the case for the more important questions. I might add that at this time Stalin was paying the greatest attention to relations with the United States and Great Britain, and a copy of every document of any importance having to do with those countries was sent to him.

Most of the papers Molotov passed along to Stalin for approval came back with no marks except the familiar initials in blue pencil in the upper left corner. But sometimes, too, there would be corrections or comments in the text, and, occasionally, slanting across the typewritten page, directions for how the document should be drawn up anew.

Our task within the secretariat was to translate immediately into Russian messages to Stalin from the President of the United States or the Prime Minister of Great Britain, as well as letters, documents, notes, and memoranda from the US or British embassies addressed personally to the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs. Sometimes these documents came provided with a Russian translation made in the embassies, but most often an English version alone was sent. In either case we made our own translation at once and dispatched the correspondence to the addressees. Replies from the Soviet leadership were sent in Russian, but when the matter was especially important or urgent we would make an unofficial translation for the convenience of the ambassadors of the allied powers.

Sometimes these messages came with a brief covering letter from the ambassador. Averell Harriman, the US ambassador, sent his letters typewritten on ordinary embassy stationery, but the British ambassador, Sir Archibald Clark Kerr (later Lord Inverchapel), was a diplomat of the old school—he wrote with a goose quill on watermarked blue paper. The decipherment of these missives cost Pavlov considerable labour.

In addition to this, we interpreted during Molotov's conversations with ambassadors and other high-ranking foreign visitors and served as interpreters for Stalin. (Pavlov was usually called upon for meetings with the British, and I for meetings with the Americans.) We also kept minutes and drafted telegrams on the substance of talks for the Soviet ambassadors in London and Washington. At times Molotov would send one or the other of us to the embassy we dealt with on some errand.

A Visit with Averell Harriman

Shortly after returning from Teheran, I had occasion to visit Ambassador Harriman on a somewhat unusual mission.

Roosevelt had been very taken by the porcelain sculpture, treating a Russian fairy-tale theme, presented by Stalin to Churchill on the occasion of the British Prime Minister's birthday, which fell during the Teheran meetings. Evidently Stalin decided at that time to present something like it to the President. On returning to Moscow he entrusted Vladimir Kemenov, President of the USSR Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries and a connoisseur of the fine arts with selecting suitable works. Stalin made the final choice personally—a rather large group in bright tones reminiscent of the Palekh masters. This was accompanied by a print of the well-known photographic portrait of Stalin with his pipe, with the inscription: "To my war-time friend—President Roosevelt". I was to take both the sculpture and the portrait to ambassador Harriman for shipment to Washington.

After announcing my visit by phone, I arrived at the appointed hour at Spaso House, the ambassadorial residence, not far from the Arbat. The sculpture, packed in a cardboard box made the trip on the back seat of a roomy ZIS-101. The driver and I lifted it out carefully and brought it into the drawing-room. The

doorman followed with the portrait, which was wrapped in thick brown paper. Shortly afterwards Harriman came downstairs to say hello. The ambassador wanted to have a look at the gifts, and together we unpacked the sculpture and portrait. Delighted, he suggested that we celebrate the occasion. At once a Chinese houseboy appeared with a tray and fixed us whisky on the rocks. We sat down at a low table in a semicircular part of the room that looked out onto the snow-covered lawn. Harriman inspected the portrait (I translated the inscription for him) and said that the President would be very pleased. He asked me to convey to Marshal Stalin his heartfelt gratitude for the expression of friendly feeling and for the generous response to the President's admiration of the gifts made to Churchill in Teheran.

Then Harriman began to speak of the great significance he attached to the recent personal meeting between Marshal Stalin and President Roosevelt.

"I feel certain," he said, "that the decisions made in Teheran will not only help in achieving military success but also have a positive effect on cooperation between our countries after the war."

Not long afterwards Roosevelt sent a brief telegram thanking Stalin for the gifts. He also sent his own portrait in a slender metal frame, with a friendly inscription.

There can be no doubt that Harriman played an important part in the development of Soviet-American relations, and not only in the war years but in the following period as well. He invariably spoke in favour of normalising and strengthening ties between the two countries. Those in the USSR who knew him always said as much, and Harriman has the same reputation in the USA. In speaking of Harriman as a consistent advocate of peaceful Soviet-American dialogue, however, it should not be overlooked that he is a staunch defender of the American way of life and the capitalist system, and makes no secret of his antipathy towards socialism. He himself, after all, comes from a wealthy family, and has increased his fortune through his own business success. He has persistently favoured the development of normal relations with the Soviet Union, inasmuch as he considers this to be in the interests of his own country. At the same time, though, he has always regarded "service to country"—that is, to the USA's ruling elite, to which he himself belongs—as a

social duty which must be fulfilled under any circumstances.

His recently published book, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin: 1941-1946*, contains a chapter with the title "How to Be 'Something and Somebody'", which recalls the following. Originally a member of the Republican Party, Harriman had gone over to the Democrats in 1928. After Franklin Roosevelt assumed the presidency in 1933, at the height of an unprecedented economic crisis, Harriman became interested in the New Deal and began to support it actively. "The average Wall Streeter," writes Harriman [who himself belongs to that caste.—*Author*], "was utterly opposed to almost everything Roosevelt tried to do and wouldn't even go down to Washington to consult with the government on recovery measures. I couldn't understand their attitude. The country was in appalling condition." Harriman was ostracised by his business colleagues for that. "When I walked down Wall Street," he tells us, "men I had known all my life crossed to the other side so they would not have to shake my hand."¹

Another incident is no less revealing. In 1946 Harriman was the US ambassador to Great Britain. By that time the Truman administration in Washington had already begun to move away from the policy of cooperation with the Soviet Union and towards that of cold war. Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace, who had been Vice-President under Roosevelt, publicly came out against this trend. Truman asked for Wallace's resignation, and immediately phoned Harriman in London to offer him the newly vacated post. Harriman writes that he was glad to accept. This says a great deal about his political attitude: although he might not always agree with every one of the administration's actions, he would not dissociate himself from it as long as the Democrats held the White House.

In the years that followed I often had occasion to visit with Averell Harriman. Whenever I am in Washington I drop in on him at his Georgetown house for an interesting and useful talk. The red-brick building, with its tall, snow-white door, fitted with handles of gleaming brass, is the Washington residence of the venerated diplomat. It is surrounded by a shady park descending

¹ W. Averell Harriman and Elie Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin: 1941-1946*, Random House, New York, 1975, p. 54.

in terraces to a swimming pool. He and I have often sat together in wicker-work chairs on the green lawn that frames the pool, talking over the distant past, the problems of today, and prospects for the future. Harriman has set forth his opinion on Soviet-American relations in these terms:

"In looking back over my experiences of some fifty years with the Soviet Union, I find that my basic judgements remain little altered, although conditions have changed radically. . . I continue to maintain, as in 1945, that on ideology there is no prospect of compromise between the Kremlin and ourselves, but that we must find ways to settle as many areas of conflict as possible in order to live together on this small planet without war."¹

The value of the little digression I have made here is, I believe, that it may help the reader form a better understanding of the role Harriman played in the years to which this book is devoted. His convictions as a defender of the interests of his class, the social system prevailing in the United States, and the good of the country (as he saw it) must be kept in mind when considering his actions and his attitudes towards the main events of the Second World War.

At the same time, what Harriman has to say about those historic events, in many of which he was a direct participant, is of great interest, especially as regards Soviet-American relations. Harriman has been interested in the USSR for many years. He first set foot on Russian soil in 1899—as a boy of eight—during one of the grand journeys his parents took him on. They landed on the Siberian side of the Bering Sea. When he recounted this adventure in the Kremlin, and added that none of them had a visa, Stalin noted:

"You couldn't do that now!"²

After the October Revolution, Harriman decided to establish business contacts with Soviet Russia. During the years of the NEP, his family obtained the Georgian Manganese concession in Chiatura, and Harriman made a number of visits to Moscow and the Caucasus on the concession's business, meeting with many Soviet leaders.

¹ Averell Harriman and Elie Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin: 1941-1946*, Random House, New York, 1975, p. VI.

² *Ibid.*, p. 40.

The evaluation of Stalin as a statesman and diplomat given in Harriman's recent book is not without interest. Quite predictably, he does not miss the chance to stress the well-known negative sides of Stalin's character. But Harriman also speaks of "his high intelligence, that fantastic grasp of detail, his shrewdness and the surprising human sensitivity. . . I found him better informed than Roosevelt, more realistic than Churchill, in some ways the most effective of the war leaders".¹

The Appointment of Eisenhower

In December of 1943 the Allies took certain practical steps towards carrying out the Teheran decisions.

On December 7, Harriman visited Molotov in order to give him an important message from President Roosevelt. Mr. Bohlen accompanied Harriman as his interpreter, and I performed the same function for the Soviet side. The President's telegram was short, but contained an important piece of information: General Eisenhower was to be appointed immediately as commander of Overlord, the operation for a landing on the northern coast of France.

The ambassador wanted to know Stalin's reaction as quickly as possible, especially since the Americans had gotten the impression that General Marshall, whom Stalin knew personally, was preferred in Moscow. When Molotov had read the telegram, Harriman asked:

"When can we expect to know Marshal Stalin's reaction to this news?"

"I'll call him right now," Molotov answered readily.

He got up from the long table at which we were all seated, went over to the telephone table, and stood silent for a moment before the green instrument, which connected directly with Stalin's private office. Then he dialed the number.

"I di-didn't interrupt anything important?" He stuttered more than usual when he was agitated, and talking with Stalin always disturbed him, even though they had known each other well for many years. "Mister Harriman is with me; he came to

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 536.

deliver a message addressed to you from the President. General Eisenhower has been appointed commander of Overlord."

He held the receiver tightly to his ear, listening.

"Yes, I understand," said Molotov. He waited for the click at the other end of the line, carefully put back the receiver, and returned to the long table.

"Marshal Stalin is satisfied with this decision," he told Harriman "He considers Eisenhower a general of experience, especially in directing large forces and amphibious operations."

Harriman was pleased. Apparently he found it agreeable to inform us that a commander had been appointed; after the many delays in the past, here was confirmation that the Western Allies were serious about opening a second front at last.

Eisenhower's appointment did much to shape his career in times to come, which ultimately led him to the White House.

The Kremlin also received another secret message on December 7, this one signed by Roosevelt and Churchill. It dealt with a number of measures connected with preparations for the Anglo-American operation in Western Europe, and also other operations, against Nazi Germany. It said that in order to disrupt the German military, economic, and industrial system, to destroy the enemy air force, and to prepare for the cross-Channel landing, strategic priority would be given to bombing attacks on Germany. Further, the message said that in accordance with the Teheran understandings the scale of the operations planned for March in the Bay of Bengal would be reduced to make more landing craft available for an operation in Northern France. Production of landing craft would be increased in the USA and Britain to reinforce the upcoming operations.

The Soviet side expressed gratitude for receipt of this information. Stalin informed Roosevelt that he welcomed the appointment of General Eisenhower, and wished him success in preparing for and carrying out the decisive operations ahead.

And so the Western Allies had finally begun to prepare in earnest for an invasion of northern France.

As for the Soviet Union, it continued to contribute to the realisation of the Teheran decisions by its actions at the front. Despite fierce resistance from the Nazis, Soviet forces moved steadily westward, clearing the aggressor out of more and more territories, pushing it back irresistibly towards the frontiers of our

homeland. Operations in the Ukraine and the north-western sectors of the front were proceeding particularly well.

The Red Army's victories won recognition from the Western Allies. In a joint message to the head of the Soviet government, dated April 18, 1944, Roosevelt and Churchill wrote: "Since Tehran your armies have been gaining a magnificent series of victories for the common cause. Even in the month when you thought they would not be active they have gained these great victories. We send you our best wishes and trust that your armies and ours, operating in unison in accordance with our Tehran agreement, will crush the Hitlerites."¹ The message also said that in keeping with the Teheran understanding the "general crossing of the sea" would be undertaken at the appointed time and "at our fullest strength". At the same time a "maximum strength" offensive was to be launched on the Italian mainland.

On April 22, Stalin sent a reply to Washington and London. It read: "The Soviet Government is gratified to learn that in accordance with the Tehran agreement the sea crossing will take place at the appointed time . . . and that you will be acting at full strength. I am confident that the planned operation will be a success.

"I hope that the operations you are undertaking in Italy will likewise be successful.

"As agreed in Tehran, the Red Army will launch a new offensive at the same time so as to give maximum support to the Anglo-American operations."²

Thus a fair start had been made towards carrying out the Teheran decisions. But there were also serious difficulties, caused largely by the backstage manoeuvring of London politicians. The British Prime Minister had been an unwilling party to the Teheran decisions, and in the months that followed he intrigued ceaselessly to impede their realisation or to shirk them altogether. Even though the Western Allies had, it would seem, already exhausted every excuse for delay in opening a second front, Churchill was not above engaging in petty machinations involving this vitally important matter after the meeting of the Big Three.

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 138.

² *Correspondence*, Vol. II, pp. 138-39.

But there was no time left for further postponements. The Soviet forces were advancing swiftly. In the south, Sevastopol and Odessa had been liberated, and the Red Army was approaching the borders of Romania. The prospect loomed large that Soviet forces would be the first to enter German territory. The Western powers could not take that risk; they were forced, at last, to become more active in Western Europe—otherwise they might not land before the coming downfall of Hitler's Reich. London and Washington were forced to devote themselves in earnest to preparations for the invasion. On May 14, Roosevelt and Churchill informed Stalin: "In order to give the maximum strength to the attack across the sea against Northern France, we have transferred part of our landing craft from the Mediterranean to England. . . In order to keep the greatest number of German forces away from Northern France and the Eastern Front, we are attacking the Germans in Italy at once on a maximum scale and, at the same time, are maintaining a threat against the Mediterranean coast of France."¹

The Soviet side too took measures to make ready for yet another offensive against Hitler's forces. On May 26, Stalin informed Churchill that the Soviet high command was engaged in intensive preparations for major new operations.

The Anglo-American forces entered Rome in early June. On June 6, the long-awaited operation Overlord was begun. That morning Churchill, who understood that all attempts to sabotage Overlord would now be in vain, wrote to Stalin: "Everything has started well. The mines, obstacles and land batteries have been largely overcome. The air landings were very successful and on a large scale. Infantry landings are proceeding rapidly and many tanks and self-propelled guns are already ashore. The weather outlook is moderate to good."² To which Stalin immediately replied: "Your communication on the successful launching of Overlord has reached me. It is a source of joy to us all and of hope for further successes.

"The summer offensive of the Soviet troops, to be launched in keeping with the agreement reached at the Tehran Conference, will begin in mid-June in one of the vital sectors of the front. . . .

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. II p. 140.

² *Correspondence*, Vol. I, p. 223.

"I shall not fail to keep you posted about the course of the operations."¹

And so a second front has finally appeared in Western Europe. One of the most important decisions adopted jointly by the Big Three had been enacted almost at the time planned. This inspired confidence that the war would soon be ended, and at the same time destroyed the hopes of those who wanted to draw out the fighting and exhaust the Soviet Union in single combat with the Axis powers. The nightmare of large-scale warfare on two fronts had become a reality for Hitler's Germany. Churchill's "Balkan variant" had proved a pipe-dream, and he was forced to drop it; he worked even more frantically, however, to derail the other Teheran decisions.

The Question of the Italian Fleet

Churchill writes in his memoirs that after the Teheran Conference he was much worried over the question of dividing the Italian fleet. During the discussion of this matter at the Big Three meeting a general understanding had been reached that the Italian fleet seized by the Anglo-Americans would be divided among the three powers. Roosevelt, in one of his conversations with Stalin, said that the Soviet Union could count on having a third of these vessels. There was also agreement that the vessels would be handed over to the Soviet side no later than the end of January 1944. If Turkey refused to let the captured Italian ships pass through to the Black Sea, they were to be delivered to northern Soviet ports.

In his usual figurative style, Churchill noted that this was a "delicate matter", and that it was necessary to go about it "like a cat with a mouse". Delayed in Cairo on account of illness, Churchill pondered ways to create obstructions or to refuse, under some plausible pretext, to carry out the promises made. He was especially concerned by Roosevelt's mention of "one third".

The question of handing over part of the Italian ships to the USSR had first been raised at the Moscow Conference of the three foreign ministers in October of 1943. At that time one

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

battleship, one cruiser, eight destroyers, four submarines, and merchant vessels with a total displacement of 40,000 tons had been discussed. "One-third", however, amounted to a great deal more, and this particularly irritated Churchill.

On January 8, 1944, Roosevelt informed the British Prime Minister in a telegram that he intended, as previously, to transfer one-third of the captured Italian vessels to the Soviet Union, and that he had told Harriman, his ambassador to Moscow, to discuss this question with the Soviets. In the same telegram, Roosevelt said that Harriman had advised against haste in this matter, as up to now the Russians had claimed less than a third of the vessels. Harriman had pointed out that the President's remark about one-third had not been officially recorded. Consequently, no mention need be made of it, and the question of handing over additional tonnage to the Russians would not arise. Roosevelt further indicated that Harriman had "emphasized the very great importance of fulfilling our pledge to yield these ships. For us to fail or to delay would in his opinion only arouse suspicion in Stalin and his associates as to the firmness of other commitments made at Tehran."¹

The President's telegram further noted that the chiefs of the Anglo-American staff had objected on several counts to handing over the ships, and spoken of the possible negative effect of this action on upcoming military operations. The chiefs feared, Roosevelt said, that they might thereby lose the Italian naval and military cooperation. Furthermore, they also feared the scuttling or sabotage of valuable ships that might be used for Anvil and Overlord. The President addressed this question to his British colleague: "Do you believe it wise to present to U. J. [Uncle Joe; Roosevelt usually referred to Stalin by this name in his personal correspondence.—*Author*] the possible effect on Overlord-Anvil . . . and suggest a delay in assigning Italian ships to him until after the launching of Overlord-Anvil? . . . It is patently impracticable for either of us to act singly in this matter, but I think you will agree, that we must not go back on what we told U.J."²

¹ *Roosevelt and Churchill. Their Secret Wartime Correspondence*, E. P. Dutton and Co., New York, 1975, Doc. N 279, p. 412.

² *Ibid.*, p. 413.

Churchill says in his memoirs that he found this message somewhat ambiguous. It is not difficult to guess, however, that Roosevelt's suggestion was close to the British Prime Minister's own point of view. He hastened to communicate that he thought only the vessels mentioned at the Moscow conference should be discussed, and that under no circumstances was the figure to be "one-third".

London and Washington exchanged views on this question for some time, and ultimately arrived at a joint conclusion that is reflected in a message from Roosevelt and Churchill to Stalin that arrived in Moscow on January 23, 1944. The two leaders said that difficulties had arisen in the way of handing over to the Soviet Union the Italian vessels, the question of which the Soviet government brought up at the Moscow conference, and on which agreement had been reached at Teheran. The Anglo-American chiefs of staff had issued a memorandum setting forth important points which had led the USA and Britain to conclude that "it would be dangerous to our triple interests actually to carry out any transfer or to say anything about it to the Italians until their cooperation is no longer of operational importance."¹

This was followed by the polite reservation that if the Soviet side nonetheless wished this, the Western Allies would, of course, open confidential negotiations with the Italians "with a view to concluding the necessary arrangements".²

"We are, however, very conscious," continued Churchill and Roosevelt, "of the dangers of the above course for the reasons we have laid before you and we have therefore decided to propose the following alternative, which from the military point of view has many advantages."³

The alternative offer was that the Western allies temporarily loan the Soviet Union the *Royal Sovereign*, a British cruiser recently refitted in the United States, and an American light cruiser. These two ships would fly the Soviet flag until, "without prejudice to military operations, the Italian vessels can be made available".⁴ The British and US governments each pledged fur-

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. I, p. 186.

² *Ibid.*, p. 187.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

ther to provide 20,000 tons of merchant shipping "to be available as soon as practicable and until the Italian merchant ships can be obtained without prejudice to the projected essential operations Overlord and Anvil."¹

The message concluded: "This alternative has the advantage that the Soviet Government would obtain the use of the vessels at a very much earlier date than if they all had to be refitted and rendered suitable for northern waters. Thus, if our efforts should take a favourable turn with the Turks, and the Straits become open, these vessels would be ready to operate in the Black Sea. We hope you will very carefully consider this alternative, which we think is in every way superior to the first proposal."²

This appeal could not be seen as anything other than an attempt to renege on the understandings reached just two months earlier in Teheran. The circumstances to which the leaders of Britain and the USA referred did not, after all, arise overnight. They could and should have been foreseen, but no one was worrying about them when the decision was made. Now considerations of a different sort had come into play. The degree of advantage to be gained by the Western powers as a result of increasing the USSR's military might was being weighed in London and Washington. Evidently certain influential groups in those countries believed that there was, in any case, no need for haste. Furthermore, the Italian fleet included new, very modern vessels, and this was doubtless not overlooked. The British and Americans wanted to keep these ships at their disposal, and offered older ones to the USSR. It is also revealing that, as may be seen from the message cited above, the leaders of Britain and the USA showed a strange forgetfulness—they did not even mention the destroyers and submarines. All of this, naturally, created surprise in Moscow.

"I must say," Stalin wrote in his reply, dated January 29, "that after getting your joint favourable reply to my question in Tehran about transferring Italian ships to the Soviet Union before the end of January 1944 I had considered the matter

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Correspondence*, Vol. I, p. 187.

settled; it never occurred to me that that decision reached and agreed to by the three of us could be revised in any way. All the more so because we agreed at the time that the matter would be fully settled with the Italians during December and January. Now I see that this is not the case and that nothing has been said to the Italians on this score."¹

It was obvious that in the situation that had arisen there was little sense in insisting that the Teheran decisions be followed in full. The message from the Western leaders made it clear that if this were done they would hold lengthy negotiations with Marshal Badoglio, who, in turn, would "talk it over" with the Italian navy. All this meant a delay of many months in handing over the promised ships. Therefore the Soviet government agreed to the temporary loan of the British battleship and the American cruiser, and also of 20,000 tons of merchant shipping from the British merchant marine and the same from the American. In doing so, the Soviet side emphasised the importance of avoiding delays; the shipping agreed on was to be transferred to the Soviet Union during the month of February. Stalin then pointed out the following: "There is no mention in your reply of the transfer to the Soviet Union at the end of January of the eight Italian destroyers and four submarines to which you, Mr. Prime Minister, and you, Mr. President, consented in Tehran."²

Stalin stressed the importance of this question: the cruiser and the battleship would be of no value without the accompanying vessels. The USA and Britain, he argued, had the entire Italian navy at their disposal, and so had no difficulty in turning over for Soviet use the eight destroyers and four submarines agreed upon. "I also agree to accept," Stalin continued, "instead of Italian destroyers and submarines, as many U.S. or British destroyers and submarines for the Soviet Union."³ Moreover, attention was drawn to the fact that the question of the transfer of these vessels could not be postponed, but should be settled simultaneously with the transfer of the battleship and the cruiser as had been agreed upon in Teheran.

The resolute tone of the Soviet government's answer had a sobering effect in London and Washington. In their new message,

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. I, p. 190.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

received in Moscow on February 24, they declared that there was "no thought" of not making the transfers as agreed at Teheran. All that they wanted, the two leaders said, was to do this "without hazarding the success of Anvil and Overlord". They promised, moreover, that "an effort will be made at once to make available from the British Navy the eight destroyers"; and said that "four submarines will also be provided temporarily by Great Britain".¹

While he was in the Kremlin submitting one of the messages on this question to Stalin, the British ambassador, Clark Kerr, remarked that all the destroyers his country was offering were old. In consequence, Stalin sent the following message to Roosevelt and Churchill on February 26, 1944: "I have misgivings about their combat qualities. It seems to me that the British and U. S. Navies should find no difficulty in assigning, out of the eight destroyers, at least four modern, not old, ones. . . . As a result of military operations by Germany and Italy we have lost a substantial part of our destroyers. It is, therefore, very important for us to have that loss repaired at least in part."²

But London and Washington refused to reconsider their decision even though, along with everything else, this clearly looked like an unfriendly act towards their Soviet Ally. On March 9 a joint message from Churchill and Roosevelt, addressed to Stalin, was received in Moscow. It said: "Although the Prime Minister instructed Ambassador Clark Kerr to tell you that the destroyers we are lending you were old, this was only for the sake of absolute frankness. In fact they are good, serviceable ships, quite efficient for escort duty."³ This was followed by the assertion that the entire Italian navy had only seven fleet destroyers, which could not in any case be used in the north, that the British fleet had suffered great losses, that vitally important landing operations were coming up in connection with Overlord, and so on. For all of these reasons, the message said, "the Prime Minister regrets that he cannot spare any new destroyers at the present time".⁴

To make a long story short, January passed, and February,

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. I, pp. 197-98.

² *Ibid.*, p. 206.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 208-09.

⁴ *Ibid.*

and March came, and still the exchanges on the transfer of vessels continued. The Western Allies, plainly, were in no hurry to shoulder the obligations they had undertaken in Teheran. They did so unwillingly, under pressure, and after a considerable delay.

A Fundamental Change

The decisive influence on the development of political events in this period was, without a doubt, the military situation. By the end of 1943, a fundamental change has occurred in the course of the Second World War. The Soviet armed forces, and the whole anti-Hitler coalition, had won signal victories. An irreversible shift was taking place in the balance of forces of the Allies and the Axis in the military, political, and economic spheres. The strategic situation in the war theatres was undergoing key changes. The offensive strategy of Hitler's Germany had met with catastrophe; after the defeat at Stalingrad, the armies of the fascist bloc were unable to achieve a single major success. In the second part of 1943, they were forced to take the defensive.

The chief reason for these important changes were the historic victories won by the Soviet armed forces in the summer and autumn of 1943. The Red Army, fighting alone against the main forces of the Axis, dealt the enemy a series of crushing blows; the result was that by the end of 1943, long before the second front was opened in Europe, a fundamental change had taken place in the balance of forces in the Second World War.

In his speech at the meeting to mark the 26th anniversary of the October Revolution, Stalin, as Chairman of the State Defence Committee, noted that the year then drawing to a close had been a turning point in the war primarily because the Red Army had been able, for the first time since the fighting began, to carry out a major summer offensive; another reason was that in a relatively short time the more experienced units of the Nazi forces had been beaten and destroyed, while at the same time Soviet forces were reinforced and battle-tempered in the course of the year's successful offensives.

At the same time, the actions of our Western Allies were also

having their effect on the course of the war. The defeat of the Italian-German armies in North Africa, the landing of the Anglo-American forces in Italy and then in France, the successes achieved by the USA and Britain in the Atlantic and in the war in the Pacific—all of these blows took their toll on the common enemy. The battles on the Soviet-German front, however, were the key ones; they were the biggest, and the most fiercely fought. From November 1942 up to the end of 1943, Soviet armies destroyed 218 of the divisions of Nazi Germany and its satellites. During the same period, the Red Army pushed its lines forward by distances from 500 up to 1,300 kilometres and liberated nearly half of the occupied territory of the USSR, moving steadily toward the western borders of the country. The attempts of Nazi commanders to withstand the onslaught of the Soviet forces met with no success.

The defeat of the Italian-German forces in North Africa improved conditions for the US and British navy and aviation based on the Mediterranean, and opened for the Allies new lines for communication with the Middle East, India, and their armed forces active in the Indian and Pacific oceans.

In offensives undertaken in the summer and autumn of 1943, Anglo-American forces occupied Sicily and the southern part of the Apennine peninsula. Italy surrendered, and the Italian army ceased to exist. This considerably weakened the fascist bloc and gave the Allies dominance over the Mediterranean. A large part of Italy, however, was still held by the Wehrmacht, and the forces of the Western Allies, so urgently required for opening a second front in Northern France, were still tied down in the Mediterranean theatre.

By the end of 1943, important changes had taken place in the Pacific theatre as well. Here, too, events at the Soviet-German front had a great influence on the way things went. The quantitative and qualitative superiority of the Allied forces over those of imperialist Japan grew steadily.

Throughout this time, however, the greatest number of German infantry and aviation units continued to be concentrated on the Soviet-German front.

It was not only the course of the armed struggle and the improving strategic position of the armed forces of the anti-Hitler coalition, though, that underlay the fundamental change in the

fortunes of war. A whole complex of factors determined the outcome, among them economic and political factors.

The economic successes of the Soviet people were of prime importance. Despite the temporary loss of important economic regions, the Soviet people, led by the Communist Party, was able to produce more matériel than Nazi Germany, which exploited the resources of a large part of Europe. At the same time, the plans of Western leaders—especially Churchill—to drag out the war were becoming more and more plainly unrealistic. The Wehrmacht had exhausted much of its strength already in battles along the Soviet-German front, and the Western Allies were able to effect a landing on the continent without large losses. In ruling quarters in Britain and the USA, interest began to be shown in coordinating strategy with that of the Soviet Union and carrying out concerted operations in Europe. But even at this stage in the war, forces hostile to the Soviet Union continued to exert a palpable influence on the main political and military organisations of Britain and the USA.

The approach of the victorious Red Army to the frontiers of the USSR had a significant effect on the overall international situation. The resistance movement became more active in all countries. The year of the radical change, 1943, was marked by an upsurge in the anti-fascist struggle in all occupied countries. Throughout Europe, patriots united on a national scale. Central and local organisations were created within the resistance movement, and the front of armed struggle against the fascist aggressors and their henchmen was broadened. Leftist forces, led by national Communist parties, came to exert a stronger influence in the resistance movement.

At the same time, diverse forms of cooperation between the Soviet Union and the national contingents of the liberation movement were also developing. The Soviet government lent its full support to this movement. By destroying the chief forces of the Hitlerite bloc on the battlefield, the Red Army greatly assisted the peoples of enslaved countries in their fight against the fascist aggressors and promoted the growth of the liberation movement.

Finally, the debacle suffered by the Wehrmacht on the Soviet-German front, and also the defeat of German and Italian forces in North Africa and Italy, aggravated the crisis within the fas-

cist bloc, causing serious political complications within the aggressors' camp. Defeat on various fronts and the bleak prospects for the battles that lay ahead undermined the morale of the people and the army alike. Nazi Germany was faced with a grievous lack of confidence in its political and military leadership.

Ultimate victory, though, was still a long way off. The struggle would still be hard, and demand new efforts. The countries of the fascist bloc still had a mighty military machine at their disposal, and great material resources with which to continue the war. Unity within the anti-Hitler coalition, and among all freedom-loving forces, was indispensable.

Henry Wallace in Tashkent

During this time one of the most stalwart supporters of American-Soviet cooperation was Henry A. Wallace, Vice-President of the United States. He called repeatedly for extending the positive experience gained in joint ventures within the anti-Hitler coalition to the post-war period as well. Wallace was with Roosevelt when the latter had to stand against those who favoured a "hard line" towards the Soviet Union. It is not surprising, therefore, that far-right elements within the USA's ruling elite had a dislike of him. When Wallace was scheduled to go to the Soviet Union on a good-will mission, Roosevelt was pressured into keeping Moscow off the vice-presidential itinerary, thus depriving him of the opportunity to meet with top Soviet leaders. Reactionary politicians in the USA feared that Wallace might express too cordial a sympathy for the Soviet people; in their opinion, this would be harmful to "American interests". It was decided that Wallace should visit only Central Asia, afterwards returning to the USA through Siberia.

Wallace was to arrive in Tashkent from Chongquing (Chungking) in mid June, 1944. Ambassador Harriman flew to the Uzbek capital to meet his Vice-President.

While in the USSR Wallace gave particular attention to agricultural problems—a field in which he had a personal interest. He and Harriman visited a number of state farms and collective farms, and also several experimental stations where scientists were developing new varieties of cotton, potatoes, and melons. Wallace was in his element: "All his life, Wallace has been trying

to get American farmers to accept science," wrote Harriman in one of the telegrams he sent to Washington after his return to Moscow. "In the Soviet Union he saw scientific methods being forced on the farmers, and it was heaven for him. Here he found capable agricultural scientists with the authority to compel farmers to follow their orders."¹

Unlike Wallace, Harriman and Tommy Thompson, a first secretary of the US embassy in Moscow who accompanied him, were more interested in the social and political conditions of the region, which, as Harriman noted, was usually closed to foreign diplomats.² The ambassador noted in his diary that the people were exceptionally hospitable, that an abundance of the earth's gifts was to be found at the local markets, and that he himself saw proof of the economic progress made by Soviet Central Asia, which formerly had been an isolated and backward region.

On the eve of the Vice-President's departure for the USA, a gala evening was held in the Tashkent Opera and Ballet Theater. Wallace made a short speech in Russian stressing the importance of continued American-Soviet cooperation. Harriman writes, not without a certain envy, that the audience "managed to understand him".³ Afterwards the American visitors saw the first Uzbek-language production of Bizet's *Carmen*.

Wallace returned to the United States via Omsk, Krasnoyarsk, Yakutsk, Markovo, and Uelkal, then on through Alaska and Canada. His trip to the Soviet Union left a strong impression on him, and everything he had seen made him an even more steadfast friend of the Soviet people, an even more dedicated advocate of continuing the cooperation born in wartime. His clearly defined position on these questions led the "hard liners" to work against his renomination to the vice-presidency in the 1944 elections. Wallace's enemies tried to convince Roosevelt that the Vice-President's popularity was declining, and warned that to keep him on the ticket might cost the Democrats the White House. Wallace had the support of certain leaders of the Democratic Party, of the trade unions, of many liberal newspapers and magazines, and also of those closest to Roosevelt, in-

¹ Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, pp. 331-32.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

cluding his wife, Eleanor. Nonetheless, a considerable number of Democratic leaders favoured the nomination of some other candidate. Byrnes, Rayburn, Truman, Winant, Justice Douglas, and several others were mentioned as possibilities.

That during this complicated discussion of different candidates Roosevelt sent Wallace off to China and the Soviet Union was seen by some as evidence that he was ready to yield to those pressing for a different vice-president. Roosevelt held a caucus of Democratic leaders at which strong objections to Wallace's candidacy were voiced. The list of possible nominees was, in essence, brought down to two: Byrnes and Truman. By the end of the caucus, though, Truman's supporters had obtained written acknowledgement from the President that their candidate was the most suitable.

When Wallace returned to Washington, it was hinted to him that he would not be on the ticket. He refused to discuss the matter with anyone but the President himself, and broached the question on his next visit to the White House. He cited polls showing that he had considerable support as the vice-presidential candidate among the delegates to the upcoming Democratic convention in Chicago. Roosevelt seemed impressed, and promised to send a letter giving his personal support. "I hope it's the same team again, Henry," he told Wallace.¹

The letter promised came soon afterwards to the chairman of the Democratic convention. Roosevelt wrote of Wallace, "I like him and I respect him and he is my personal friend. For these reasons I personally would vote for his renomination if I were a delegate to the convention."²

It is possible that at the time Roosevelt really thought he could overcome the resistance of Wallace's enemies and keep him as Vice-President. Many American authors, however, maintain that the President had already settled on Truman in the belief that only his candidacy could ensure him the support of the right wing of the Democratic Party and thus guarantee victory at the polls, but was unwilling to make his decision public. At any rate, when Byrnes, who had also been given to understand he would not be on the ticket, spoke to Roosevelt on the telephone,

¹ James M. Burns, *Roosevelt: the Soldier of Freedom*, p. 505.

² *Ibid.*, p. 506.

the President denied that he had written him off. Indeed, he advised Byrnes to press his candidacy. But when the convention opened in Chicago, Roosevelt telephoned from San Diego to say that Truman was his choice. He was at last convinced, apparently, that this decision was most likely to win him the White House for another four years. "Tell the Senator," the President said during that call, "that if he wants to break up the Democratic Party by staying out, he can; but he knows as well as I what that might mean at this dangerous time in the world."¹

Truman did not hold out long, and the question was settled. After winning re-election, Roosevelt offered Wallace the post of Secretary of Commerce in his new cabinet. But Wallace was not to hold the job for long. Roosevelt's death in April of 1945 brought Truman to the White House, and signalled an abrupt pull-back in cooperation with the Soviet Union. Wallace publicly opposed the USA's slide towards cold war, and Truman lost no time in removing him from the new administration.

The "Parade" of War Prisoners

That sunny July morning in 1944 I was free: my duty shift did not start until two. Thus I was able to witness an unusual sight. The previous evening it had become known that German prisoners of war would be convoyed through Moscow the next morning. They were to be marched from the Dynamo Stadium past the Belorussky Railway Station, and then along the Sadovoye Ring. When I got to Samotyoch'naya Square a crowd of Muscovites had already gathered there. The overpass that now looms over the square had not yet been built; the broad street descended gradually from Petrovka to Tsvetnoi Boulevard. Soon we saw the first ranks in the distance. They filled the whole road; mounted guards rose along the sidewalks to the left and right.

The gray-green mass slowly drew nearer, and more and more ranks appeared in the distance. The officers came first; they were still trying to keep some measure of smartness and military bearing. But the soldiers who came after were a sorry enough sight. Their unbuttoned, sun-bleached field shirts sagged from

¹ *Ibid.*

their shoulders. Almost all of them stumbled along listlessly, heads down; some wore crumpled forage caps, others were hatless.

The onlookers stood motionless on the sidewalk, eyes riveted to the passing prisoners. The war had entered its fourth year, and many of the people who had come here to look had already paid a bitter price—friends and relatives lost, trials and hardships suffered. All of them, however, remained calm and dignified, although their eyes were full of grief and reproach. No one shouted, no one made threats.

I remembered how not long before Wehrmacht units had goose-stepped down the Champs Elysées. Soon afterwards, returning from their Blitzkrieg campaign to the west, they marched in a victory parade in Berlin. That was the summer of 1940. I was in the Tiergarten, not far from the bedecked reviewing stand where the self-confident Führer stood, arm raised in a Nazi salute to his "invincible armies". How arrogant and haughty they were! Already they could see the whole world at their feet. It was at that time that intensive work was begun on the Barbarossa plan: preparations were underway for a treacherous attack on the Soviet Union. In June of 1941, the Nazi hordes turned their full might to the east, driving towards Moscow. In the autumn of that year Hitler boasted that the cupolas of the Kremlin cathedrals could be seen from the Wehrmacht's frontlines.

And here they were, in Moscow. I stood on the Sadovoye Ring, watching the gray-green stream. My two-year-old son, Sergei, sat without stirring on my shoulders, watching this strange spectacle. He had been told that these were captured enemy soldiers, but of course did not understand the real meaning of what he saw. How much that "parade" of war prisoners said to me! It filed past for a half-hour, an hour, two. There were thousands of them, tens of thousands. They had invaded our land with weapons in their hands, burning and destroying everything in their path. Their orders were to raze the capital of the Soviet Union, to hand over all our riches to German concerns. But the task had proved beyond their strength, impossible. They had been able to enter Moscow only as prisoners of war. And now they were being led through the streets of Moscow, the city they had moved towards so eagerly, which now had become the symbol of the invincibility of the socialist state.

What were they thinking about as they plodded along the

Sadovoye Ring? Did they realise that Hitler had duped them into a hopeless venture, that now their own country was on the brink of disaster, that the Nazis' criminal aggression, and everything they had done in the countries and regions they had for a time enslaved, would have to be paid for?

I looked into their faces. Many of them were staring glumly at the pavement underfoot, indifferent to everything. But there were some who threw angry looks. Probably they still believed in the "wonder weapon" with which Hitler had promised to reverse the course of the war. But that was the raving of a maniac, overcome with defeat and fear of the future. There would be no more lightning victories for the Wehrmacht—that was obvious to everyone who watched, on July 17, 1944, as 57,000 prisoners were marched through Moscow, a city full of sunshine and people, a city confident of the rightness of its cause and its ultimate victory.

In later years, in West Germany, I happened to meet several men who had marched in that memorable "parade". Their reminiscences were not without interest. Knowing about the atrocities of Gestapo men and the inhuman treatment the Nazis gave Soviet prisoners of war, they were very alarmed when a large mass of prisoners was brought together outside Moscow. They were afraid that they would be targets for vengeance, that they would be "driven like cattle clear to Siberia", where they would all freeze to death. But first, they feared, they were to be marched through a raging crowd, which would vent on them its fury and hatred. Recalling the terrifying picture their imaginations had painted, the men would always say they were surprised by the restraint and calm of the Muscovites who had turned out to look at them.

A joke was born at this time: A German prisoner of war, returning to his camp from Moscow, looks at the map of the hemispheres hanging on the barracks wall and asks his buddy, "What's that little brown spot in the middle of Europe?"

"That's Germany."

"And that huge pink stretch that goes all the way out to the Pacific?"

"That's the Soviet Union."

"Did the Führer see that map before he sent us here?"

This joke was often to be heard in West Germany after the war.

The procession of prisoners was instructive not only for those who marched in it but also for foreign diplomats in Moscow, who also witnessed it. They could not help but see in that unusual spectacle the might of the Soviet Union and the Soviet people's fortitude, determination, and faith in their forthcoming victory. Without a doubt, the sight of thousands and thousands of men from Hitler's Wehrmacht, which not long before had been thought invincible, being led as prisoners through the streets of Moscow had an enormous psychological impact. It goaded the leaders of the Western powers yet again to take a more sober look at the facts: victory over Hitler's Germany and its allies was not far off. The war was coming to an end, and the Soviet Union, despite the enormous casualties and destruction it had suffered, would emerge still more robust and powerful than before. It was obvious too that the USSR would play a vastly more active role in the post-war world than it did between the two world wars, and that its international prestige would reach new heights. Lastly, the politicians of the West were compelled to ponder the circumstance that the success of the resistance movement in countries occupied by the Axis powers, which had been greatly advanced by the brilliant victories of Soviet arms, would necessarily change the political situation in Europe, given the important part played in that movement by progressive forces, and especially by the Communists, who had shown immense courage and staunchness in the struggle against the aggressors.

The conclusion logically to be drawn from all of this was that a new approach towards the socialist state ought to be worked out, that new paths must be sought in international politics and a new mechanism be created for cooperation between states with different social systems. As for the Soviet Union, it had never deviated from Lenin's principles of peaceful coexistence between countries with different social systems, and urged that problems arising be resolved through negotiations rather than armed force, and that mutually beneficial cooperation be undertaken. The way to such cooperation would have been open, had the Western Allies been willing. In London and Washington, however, forces hostile to the idea of cooperating on an equal footing with the Soviet Union continued to hold sway, and sought to resume the pre-war anti-Soviet course. In essence, they hoped to exert pressure on Moscow while the Soviet people was still embroiled

in a bloody and bitter struggle against the main force of Nazi Germany and its allies, and thereby bring about post-war arrangements suited to the expansionist drives of US and British monopolies.

Two Conceptions of the UN Charter

On August 21, 1944, a three-power conference opened in Dumbarton Oaks (Washington, D.C.); its purpose was to draft a charter for a new international organisation. The work of this conference and the discussions that took place at it showed that the goals of the organisation to be created were seen differently by the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and the USA and Britain, on the other.

In Moscow, political thinking had long since addressed itself to the problem of protecting mankind securely from the threat of a new world-wide conflict. A great deal might depend on the structure of an international organisation for maintaining peace and security in the world. The Soviet government stressed emphatically that such an organisation must act promptly and effectively. The unity of the great powers was the cornerstone on which the lasting edifice of peace was to be raised. It was from precisely this position that the Soviet government proceeded during the working-out of the new organisation's structure. Moreover, particular attention must be paid to the negative experience with the League of Nations, which in its time had been connected with quite a few illusions in the West.

The chief defect of the League of Nations was that it proved incapable of taking effective measures against violators of the peace. There was nothing coincidental about this: the League's founders were not, at bottom, interested in an effective mechanism for stopping aggression, because to a large extent they saw the League as a cover under which to prepare for an attack on the Soviet Union—the only socialist state existing at that time.

The participants in the Dumbarton Oaks Conference could not, of course, overlook the failures of the League of Nations as they elaborated a structure for an international security organisation. The problem was discussed several times in the course of the conference, and special attention was given to voting procedure in the governing body of the proposed organisation, since

it was recognised that unity must be maintained among the great powers, for they were to bear prime responsibility for maintaining peace in the world.

It was on just this question, however, that serious differences arose at the conference, reflecting conflicting views of the proposed security organisation's goals. For the Soviet Union, the chief concern was achieving lasting peace; the ruling elites of the USA and Britain, on the contrary, regarded the new international organisation mainly as a tool for achieving their imperialist aims.

When the Americans spoke of consolidating peace, they meant a peace in which the United States would dominate. Even President Roosevelt, in stressing the importance of concerted action by the great powers, had something in mind that might be expressed by the formula "equality for all, but more equality for some than others". Undoubtedly, it was believed in American ruling quarters at this time that after the war the USA would be the world's strongest power, exerting a decisive influence on international affairs. The thought of a "Pax Americana" was already being cherished by some in Washington. The idea that the United States was to have a "starring" role perceptibly affected the American conception of a charter for an international organisation to maintain the peace.

I had the honour to be part of the Soviet delegation to the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, which was headed by Andrei Gromyko, then the USSR's ambassador to the USA. The work of the conference and its atmosphere are described in my book, *At the Birth of the United Nations*. I will confine myself here to just a few observations.

Each delegation brought to Dumbarton Oaks a draft for the charter, or "fundamental document", of the new security organisation. The conference began with a comparison of the positions held by the different participants based on a point-by-point discussion of the texts submitted. In brief, their content was as follows.

The British proposals, which consisted of five sections, started off with a statement of the principles and aims of the new organisation, and also of its structure. In addition to maintaining peace and security in the world, the organisation was to undertake the task of improving economic conditions throughout the world and performing other positive functions. Emphasis was

placed on the need to ensure a special role for the four powers which were to found the organisation: the USSR, the USA, Britain, and China. The main bodies were to be a world assembly and a world council. The second section contained suggestions for the peaceful resolution of international disputes and for measures to maintain peace and security. The world council was to be responsible for settling political disputes; its resolutions would be adopted by a two-thirds vote, including the votes of the four great powers. The following section was devoted to military questions. It was proposed that a military-staff-committee be made up of representatives of the four powers. Garrisons were to be stationed in several specified regions.

The American proposals which were very detailed, contained the following sections: 1. General character of the international organisation; 2. The General Assembly; 3. The Executive Council; 4. The International Court of Justice; 5. The peaceful settlement of disputes; 6. The definition of a threat to peace and violations of peace, and actions to be taken in consequence; 7. Regulation of arms and armed forces; 8. Measures in the field of economic and social cooperation; 9. General administration and the secretariat; 10. Procedure for creating the organisation and setting it into action.

The section on the General Assembly stated that all members of the organisation were to have one vote in that body. On questions of budget and finance, however, each country was to have a number of votes proportional to its financial contribution to the organisation; this was calculated to ensure greater influence for the USA. According to the American proposals, the Executive Council was to have eleven members, including the four founding powers and France. Resolutions would be adopted by majority vote including the concurring votes of all the permanent member-countries. The Economic and Social Council was to have broad powers, in particular for coordinating the activities of various specialised agencies working in the socio-economic field. The new organisation was to have a general director with a five-year term of office, to whom the secretariat would be subordinated.

The Soviet proposal stressed that the leading role in the new organisation should belong to those powers which had borne the main burden in the war against the fascist aggressors. It was

they who would be chiefly responsible for maintaining peace. For that reason all the great powers should be represented in the central body, and their unanimous vote required for the adoption of resolutions. The Soviet proposals stated that the new organisation was to have international armed forces at its disposal. It was further urged that since the organisation's prime aim was security, other questions—economic, social, etc.—should not be included in its competence, but rather entrusted to a separate organisation.

Although the draft charters agreed or were similar on many points, even a preliminary comparison made it clear that they were founded on fundamentally different conceptions, and this difference was likewise reflected in the discussions at Dumbarton Oaks. The British and American proposals laid emphasis on the all-embracing character of the new organisation, while the Soviet side gave prominence to the basic and most important task—repulsing the aggression and maintaining peace and security. Through the efforts of the Soviet delegation, the United Nations Charter as ultimately adopted particularly stressed this chief task.

A few aspects of the discussions on these draft charters may now be explored.

Much light was thrown on the positions of the participants by the discussion of the term "aggression", which appeared in the Soviet proposal. The British and the Americans suggested that the term should not be used because it "might cause difficulties". Sir Alexander Cadogan, the head of the British delegation, expressed the opinion that in many cases two countries went to war without it being clear which was the aggressor. Gromyko rejected this sort of thinking decisively, pointing out that one of the organisation's main functions would be determining, in every given situation, which country was the aggressor. "This will be the sacred duty of the future organisation for international security," Gromyko said. "If we do not speak of it plainly, we shall be making it easier for a potential aggressor to go about his ugly work."

The Americans and British nevertheless continued to object to the term "aggression". Seeking to prevent the concept from being precisely formulated, they raised sundry formal and technical questions. Cadogan took the line that the important thing

was not how aggression was defined but the new organisation's ability to put an end to conflicts. Protracted debates over which country was the aggressor, he claimed, would only waste time. James Clement Dunn, an American delegate, referred to the many years of debate in the League of Nations over the concept of aggression, in which no agreement had ever been reached.

It was obvious that the Western powers were doing their best to exclude defining aggression from the organisation's competence. The Soviet side vigorously opposed every attempt to do this. As a Soviet delegate pointed out, it was precisely the lack of a clear definition of aggression that had prevented measures from being taken in the past against violators of the peace. The League of Nations had been unable to reach agreement on the term in question because influential political groups in the West had not wanted it clearly defined. Thus they had encouraged fascist rulers by creating a loophole that made it possible to commit acts of aggression with impunity.

After a long and sometimes rather heated discussion, the concept of aggression remained without any firm definition; the document agreed on at Dumbarton Oaks did, nonetheless, make mention of "acts of aggression".

Now, looking back, it is clear why the representatives of the USA and Britain at Dumbarton Oaks resisted so stubbornly the inclusion in the UN Charter of a definition of "aggression". Flagrant acts of imperialist aggression and interference in the affairs of others that have taken place since the war plainly show who did not want aggression to be defined in the UN Charter, and why. The position US and British representatives took on this question at Dumbarton Oaks shows that in agreeing to the creation of an international security organisation, Washington and London also wanted to keep a free hand; they foresaw that the lack of a clear definition of aggression would leave the way open for imperialistic adventures of every sort.

The Controversy over Veto Rights

During the preliminary exchange of opinions among members of the anti-Hitler coalition on post-war settlement the need for unity among the great powers was not doubted if the proposed organisation for international security was to work effectively.

Nevertheless, there was heated discussion of this question as well at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference. This began when the American and British representatives suggested that the general rule of unanimity be inapplicable if the dispute involved the interests of one of the permanent Council members. The Soviet delegation took a negative attitude towards this proposal. The controversy on voting procedure went on throughout the conference, and a great deal of pressure was brought to bear on the Soviet delegation. Edward Stettinius, the head of the American delegation, said that the US Senate would never approve a document that allowed a party to dispute the right to vote on it. He expressed concern that the Soviet Union's "rigid" position might keep the United Nations Organisation from being created at all, since the smaller countries, he claimed, would not agree to the procedure proposed by the USSR. The disagreements that had arisen, Stettinius warned, might become known to the press, and then there would be a ballyhoo about the "failure" of the conference. The American position was upheld by the British delegation.

Despite these pressures, the Soviet delegation stood firm. Gromyko declared that no exceptions could be allowed to the principle of unanimity among the great powers. He recalled that this principle had been fundamental since the very beginning of the talks. It was only natural that the great powers should have a special position in the organisation, inasmuch as they would be chiefly responsible for maintaining peace. The Soviet delegate expressed confidence that the smaller countries would accept this principle; such an approach had always been envisaged.

"One should not suppose beforehand," Gromyko said, "that the great powers, who bear the main responsibility for the security of nations, will immediately become involved in disputes. On the contrary, one must hope that their successful cooperation during the war and their present struggle for the security of mankind will be of great significance for the maintenance of peace in time to come."

The Soviet Union, of course, had weighty reasons for adhering firmly to the position on this matter that had been agreed on earlier. It was not difficult to see that to accept the Anglo-American proposals would be to undermine the unity of the great powers which was so vital to the cause of peace. A serious blow



The Soviet delegation at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference. Left to right:
S. V. Krylov, S. A. Golunsky, S. K. Tsarapkin, A. A. Sobolev, A. A. Gromyko, V. M. Berezikov, Lieutenant-General N. V. Slavin, Rear Admiral K. K. Rodionov, G. G. Dolbin, M. M. Yunin



Churchill being seen off at Moscow Airport
in October 1944



The Victory Parade on Red Square in Moscow

would be dealt to cooperation among them if one of the permanent members of the Council were denied the right to take part in the voting and the Security Council passed a decision without it—let alone against it. The Soviet Union could not allow the Western powers to make use of numerical majority for dictating their will to it as a socialist state.

In proposing that a party to a dispute not be allowed a vote in the Council, the Americans and British were certainly not being disinterested and objective, as they pretended. At that time the Soviet Union was the only socialist power, and Washington and London were confident that in the case of any serious disagreements they would have an absolute majority in the Council and the Assembly of the new organisation. Thus, they could safely pose as being prepared to submit to the rules they were proposing. At the time, it even did not occur to them that any of the Council's members (except the USSR), bound as they were by a multitude of economic, political, ideological, and military ties to the USA and Britain, might dare to vote against them. They wanted to deprive the Soviet Union of the right to take part in the voting on any possible dispute or conflict that immediately affected its interests.

The talks at Dumbarton Oaks had practically reached a dead end on this fundamental matter, and so the Americans decided to take the discussion beyond the framework of the conference. President Roosevelt sent a personal message to Stalin expressing concern over the progress of the talks. "One issue of importance only apparently remains on which we have not yet reached agreement," Roosevelt wrote. "This is the question of voting in the Council. We and the British both feel strongly that in the decisions of the Council parties to a dispute should not vote even if one of the parties is a permanent member of the Council whereas I gather from your Ambassador that your Government holds a contrary view."

Roosevelt explained that he could not abandon the principle the Americans were upholding, referring to the position of the smaller nations, which, he maintained, would see any other solution as an attempt by the great powers to put themselves above the law. "I hope for these reasons," he wrote in conclusion, "that you will find it possible to instruct your Delegation to agree to our suggestion on voting. The talks at Dumbarton Oaks can be

speedily concluded with complete and outstanding success if this can be done."¹

Roosevelt's appeal did not lead to a solution of the problem. In his reply, Stalin recalled the Americans' initial proposal, by which a special voting procedure was to be established for disputes directly involving one or several members of the Council who have the status of permanent members. After emphasising that this suggestion seemed to him the right one, Stalin continued: "Otherwise the agreement we reached at the Tehran Conference, where we were guided by the desire to ensure above all the four-Power unity of action so vital to preventing future aggression, will be reduced to nought. This unity implies, naturally, that there must be no suspicions among the Powers. As to the Soviet Union, it cannot very well ignore the existence of certain absurd prejudices which often hamper a genuinely objective attitude to the USSR. Furthermore, other countries should likewise weigh the likely consequences of lack of unity among the leading Powers."²

The caution about the possible consequences of confrontation among the great powers was very much to the point. By this time many political figures in the West were expressing doubts about the Anglo-American formula. Differences cropped up even among the American delegation at Dumbarton Oaks. Some of the American delegates felt that failure to reach agreement on the question of voting in the Council could have an immediate and negative effect not only on the development of military operations in Europe but also on the prospects for the Soviet Union's entry into the war against Japan. They argued that this could ultimately condemn to failure the attempt to found an international security organisation. Finally, they seriously doubted that the Senate would agree to a limitation of the United States' vote in a dispute which the country became involved in. Charles Bohlen, an American diplomat who took part in the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, admits in his book *Witness to History: 1929-1969* that "there was also a good deal of sentiment in the United States against joining an organization which,

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 159.

² *Ibid.*, p. 160.

under certain circumstances, would be able to force its will on us."¹

In view of this, many members of the American delegation suggested the adoption of the Soviet position, which they thought reasonable and which, in essence, had been the American position earlier. Soviet firmness on this question heightened the dissension in the Western camp.

The point of view held by many of US military and political leaders at the time played a certain part in the ultimate settlement of the question of voting in the United Nations Security Council. It proved impossible, however, to reach agreement on this at Dumbarton Oaks. The final document indicated only that the three governments would continue to look into the matter.

Two and a half months after the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, Roosevelt sent a message to Stalin setting forth a new idea, which involved differentiating the voting procedure depending on the nature of the problems being considered by the Security Council. The Soviet government studied this proposal, but the question remained open until the three-power conference in Yalta, where the current procedure was finally settled on.

¹ Charles E. Bohlen, *Witness to History: 1929-1969*, W. W. Norton and Co., New York, 1973, p. 159.

THE ROAD TO POTSDAM

Complications in Relations Among the Allies

Military Planning

Further work was required on the question of military planning that had been raised in Teheran. This work was undertaken mainly by the Soviet and American sides, and was based on an exchange of opinions between Stalin and Roosevelt that had taken place in Teheran. In particular, this involved "shuttle" flights by American aircraft: after taking off from the West and dropping their bombs on Germany, American squadrons could land in Soviet territory to refuel and take on a new load of bombs, so as to accomplish the same mission again on their way back. On February 2, 1944, Ambassador Harriman visited Stalin in the Kremlin to discuss this plan; the essence of their discussion is given in Harriman's memoirs.

In stating the main points, the ambassador stressed that if the American airforce could use landing strips in Soviet territory it could take off from England and Italy to bomb Germany. Up to that time bombing raids had been limited mainly to peripheral areas, and if distant targets were attacked pilots often had to make their way back by the same route they had come, sometimes in damaged planes, pursued by a whole flock of German fighter planes.

"Stalin asked Harriman how many planes would be involved. 'One to three flights of 120 planes at a time,' the Ambassador replied. 'Would the Russians have to supply fuel?' 'No—fuel, bombs and spare parts would be supplied by the United States...' 'Would Americans or Russians be used to service the planes?' Harriman replied that a number of Americans would have to be brought in, men who were specialists in servicing the

B-17 and B-24 bombers. If the Russians could supply ground personnel to work under the supervision of American specialists, that would be an excellent arrangement."¹

After thinking a little, Stalin gave his approval to the plan, adding that it ought to make the Nazis feel the Allied blows even more.

The shuttle bombing operation was given the code name *Frantic*. Stalin suggested that for a start landing facilities on Soviet territory be made available for 150 to 200 heavy bombers. He also gave permission for American photo-reconnaissance planes to land daily on Soviet territory; one such plane was to arrive from Italy, the other from England.

"The pilots would photograph German targets as they flew in and out," Harriman explained, "and they would gladly give special attention to any areas of particular interest to the Red Army."²

Stalin thanked the ambassador, and then asked about the octane rating of the fuel used by the American planes, about how air-to-ground communication would be maintained, and about the language barrier to be overcome. Harriman said that he would put General Deane, the head of the American military mission, in charge of settling all these practical matters with Soviet specialists.

Thus the Soviet side gave a prompt and favourable answer to a question that the American government considered highly important.

The second question on Harriman's mind during this talk had to do with air bases along the Soviet Union's Pacific coast. The Americans wanted to use such bases to step up air attacks on Japan. The Soviet government, however, was not yet ready to discuss the matter.

"Stalin said he was still fearful of provoking a Japanese attack before his forces in the Far East were re-equipped and reinforced. He talked of transferring four infantry corps ... to the Far East, but that could not be done, he said, until German resistance in the west had begun to falter. 'As soon as these forces

¹ Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, pp. 296-97.

² *Ibid.*

are transferred,' Stalin said to Harriman, 'the Soviet Government will cease to fear Japanese provocation.'"¹

Stalin gave a positive answer to the question of whether the Soviet side was prepared to exchange intelligence data on Japan with the USA; he added, however, that the information Moscow had was not extensive.

Stalin then told Harriman that Sugiyama, the chief of the Japanese General Staff, had expressed to a Soviet representative at an official reception in Tokyo a desire to meet with the head of the Soviet government.

Sugiyama had told him that "the Germans meant nothing to the Japanese and that their treaty with Germany was only a scrap of paper". The Soviet leader, of course, had no intention of meeting with Sugiyama, and no reply had been made to the Japanese.

Nonetheless, Stalin regarded this overture by the Japanese as an indication of their fear for the future—a fear so great that high-ranking Japanese officer had approached an ordinary Soviet representative on so delicate a question.

"Another straw in the wind, Stalin said, was the sudden willingness of the Japanese to sell the Russians their oil and coal concessions in the northern part of Sakhalin Island. The sale had been provided for . . . in April 1941. It was to have been completed by October of that year but the Japanese had stalled for more than two years. Now they were eager to conclude the bargain, Stalin said, and he read this as another sign of nervousness in Tokyo."²

Stalin also informed Harriman that the Soviet government had received reports according to which the Japanese might soon begin a retreat from the extensive territories they had seized. Harriman asked Stalin where the new line of defence would run. Stalin said he was not sure about the details, but he thought it would run through Shanghai, the Shangdun Peninsula, Manchuria, and around the Japanese Islands. "The Japanese, he added, would not engage their main forces to defend their outer perimeter but would withdraw to the inner line which was more convenient and easier to defend."³

¹ Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, p. 297.

² *Ibid.*, p. 298.

³ *Ibid.*

As is readily apparent, Harriman had received valuable information about Japan. By agreeing to an exchange of intelligence data, the Soviet side had demonstrated its readiness to cooperate actively. It is not surprising that Harriman was highly pleased by the meeting. Returning to his embassy, he drew up a detailed account of it for Roosevelt, adding that Stalin "could not have been more friendly".¹

The Soviet Union also showed its good will by awarding the Order of Suvorov to Generals Marshall and Eisenhower.

On February 10, Harriman met with Anastas Mikoyan, the People's Commissar of Foreign Trade. Their conversation dealt with American shipments to the Soviet Union. Mikoyan said he was satisfied with the success of deliveries by the southern route, across the Persian Gulf. He added that the Soviet government would like to present awards to several Americans for their services in organising those deliveries. Harriman promised to consult with Secretary of State Cordell Hull to make sure that US laws on receipt of foreign awards by American citizens were observed.

This question was quickly settled, and on April 15, by decree of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, a large group of American officers received awards for organising deliveries of foodstuffs to the Soviet Union and for their aid to the Red Army in its struggle against the fascist aggressors. Major General Donald Connolly, who was in charge of the entire operation, received the Order of Suvorov, Second Class.

Scepticism in London

At this same period negative tendencies were becoming more and more noticeable in relations between Moscow and London. Churchill and many of his colleagues, seeing that the military situation was rapidly changing in favour of the USSR, showed an increasing nervousness. They hoped that by pressuring the Soviet Union they might keep their positions in Eastern Europe and the Balkans.

The British were seeking to get American support in this, as can be seen with particular clarity from Harriman's recollec-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

tions of his talks with British leaders in London early in May of 1944. President Roosevelt had summoned him to Washington for consultations, and he made a brief stopover in the British capital.

At a late luncheon to which Harriman was invited by the Prime Minister, Churchill complained that the Russians did not understand his position. He had done his utmost, he said, to smooth out disagreements between the Polish émigré government and Moscow, and had not been met halfway. With much effort he had persuaded the Poles to accept new boundaries, but had gotten nothing in exchange. Harriman did not agree. He said the Soviets had every reason not to trust the London Polish government as then constituted, since, as Harriman said, it was influenced by Sosnkowski and the military who saw no other future than a war against the Soviet Union.

Churchill continued to stand his ground: he was quite content with the stand adopted by the London Poles, which made it possible for him to use Poland as a weapon for intriguing against the USSR. The next day, in the course of yet another long talk, Churchill told Harriman again that it was impossible to deal with the Russians. The same line was taken by Sir Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary: he said that he seriously doubted whether Britain could ever again work with the Soviets. Harriman tried to reason with Eden, arguing that "by patience, understanding and readiness to be firm on matters of principle, the Western Allies could still develop 'reasonably satisfactory relationships' with the Russians".¹

Thus, as early as the beginning of 1944, London was moving away from its alliance with the USSR and towards confrontation. Harriman notes in his diary that he observed a "sharp swing in official British opinion", and reports that Lord Beaverbrook told him that "everyone in the British government . . . was anti-Russian now".²

Churchill and his closest associates continually made such representations to the Americans, seeking to arouse in them distrust and suspicion of Soviet policy goals. At this time everything was focused on Poland, but in fact the question was much bro-

¹ Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, p. 328.

² *Ibid.*

ader: the ruling quarters in Britain were preparing the ground for a review of the decisions jointly adopted by the members of the anti-Hitler coalition, leading ultimately to abandonment of plans for cooperation among the three great powers after the war.

There were, of course, influential groups in the United States that wholeheartedly agreed with Churchill's point of view. Among them was Senator Truman, who became Vice-President in the 1944 election. Inevitably, the intrigues of these groups clouded the atmosphere within the anti-Hitler coalition.

Special Ties Between the USA and Britain

The foreign policy of the USA and Britain continued to be wholly directed towards creating conditions favouring the attainment of definite military and political ends in the war against the fascist bloc. Washington and London gave special attention to ensuring that the terms of the post-war settlement would be advantageous to the American and British ruling classes.

The development of cooperation between the USA and Britain within their alliance was dictated by the interests of monopoly capital. Anglo-American summit conferences were held in Washington in May of 1943 and in Quebec in August of that year. The inequality of the partners was plainly perceptible at these conferences. The growing economic and military potential of the USA put it in the forefront, giving it a greater voice in settling political and strategic questions.

Under these circumstances, the British ruling quarters sought to broaden political and military cooperation with Washington. On August 19, Churchill and Roosevelt signed a secret document on cooperation towards creating the atomic bomb. The USA, which had taken the lead over Britain in this field, agreed to resume, although on a limited scale, the exchange of information with Britain which had been interrupted. The USA and Britain pledged not to use atomic weapons against each other, and to use them against a third country only by mutual agreement.

The conditions of the Quebec agreement, and especially the stipulation that no information about the atomic bomb be given

to other countries without consent from both parties, clearly reflected the intention of ruling groups in the USA and Britain to strengthen their domination in the world arena. During his visit to the United States in May of 1943, Churchill propounded the idea of "common citizenship" between the Anglo-Saxon countries and suggested that the structure of their military alliance be kept after the war and that the two countries collaborate closely on the chief questions of foreign policy.

On September 12, summarising the results of his recent talks with Roosevelt, the British Prime Minister telegraphed to London that plans for an international security organisation did not place under the slightest doubt the special relationship that naturally existed between Britain and America.

The radical change that had taken place in the international and military situation in favour of the forces of democracy and progress made it difficult for the Western Allies to realise their separate military-strategic and political plans. Certain obligations were placed on the governments of the USA and Britain by their countries' participation, together with the Soviet Union, in the anti-fascist coalition. The notable victories of the Soviet armed forces helped to strengthen that coalition, and broad publicity given by the Western press to the heroic struggle of the Red Army and the steadfastness of the Soviet people forced hostile elements to soften their tone. Anti-Soviet statements of various kinds began, little by little, to decline in number. The publication in the USSR of detailed information on the military aid made available through Lend-Lease and on the work of different public funds for assistance to Russia in the USA and Britain also helped to create a more favourable atmosphere.

The positive attitude that President Roosevelt personally took towards cooperation with the Soviet Union was also of importance. He understood how vital the USSR's continuing active struggle against Nazi Germany was for the USA. At the same time, though, Roosevelt had to reckon with pressures from certain elements in the American ruling elite that opposed a realistic course towards the Soviet Union. This explains a certain ambiguity in British and American relations with the Soviet Union. All things considered, the leaders of the USA regarded cooperation with the USSR the best policy. This was what foiled the plans of those groups in the West that wanted to set Nazi

Germany and the Soviet Union wear each other down to exhaustion.

Relations among the main members of the anti-Hitler coalition continued, nevertheless, to be complicated. After the fundamental change in the course of the war, the ruling quarters in the USA and Britain strove wherever they could to hinder the growth of leftist forces and of the resistance movement, and to prevent democratic revolutions. The Western Allies strengthened their ties with those social groups within the resistance movement that wanted to restore the old, bourgeois regimes. Alarmed by the struggle in which the masses of the people were engaged, they cut their aid to those patriotic forces that favoured a renovation of the entire state structure after the invaders were driven out.

The US and British governments hoped to shape relations between the USSR and East European countries that might be liberated by Soviet troops in a way favourable to themselves. John Winant, the US ambassador to Britain, said in a telegram to Roosevelt on July 26 that as the Soviet forces advanced, London and Washington "might well want to influence their terms of capitulation and occupancy in Allied and enemy territory".¹

The Western Allies gave preference to monarchist, conservative elements in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, and thus placed their hopes in forces hostile to democracy and socialism. In Yugoslavia, for example, the British government, even after establishing ties with the partisans led by Josip Broz Tito in May of 1943, continued to support the royalist émigré government and the Cetniks of Draža Mihailovich. The aims of such tactics were apparent: as a British official explained in the spring of 1943, London wanted to have an armed force at hand to prevent anarchy and communist chaos after the withdrawal of the Axis.

The Western Allies sought to prevent fundamental democratic transformations in Italy after the fall of Mussolini. Even before the Anglo-American forces landed in the south of Italy, they had established contact with conservative and monarchist groups that had an interest in preserving the domination of monopoly capital in the country.

¹ Herbert Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin. The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1957, p. 167.

In relation to France, Washington and London pursued a policy that actually delayed the cohesion of anti-fascist forces. The Western Allies, particularly the USA, had reacted negatively from the very beginning to the request for recognition of the French Committee for National Liberation. The ruling quarters in America intended to place France and its colonies under their own influence. It was believed in Washington that France would be a second-rate power for a long time after the war, thereby making it easier to carry out plans for establishing American sway in Western Europe. The USA, not wishing a real rebirth of France, opposed the formation of centralised French governing bodies. It was Roosevelt's view that when the Allied armies entered France it should be regarded as an occupied country, subordinate to the American and British military authorities. The ruling groups in the USA were patently trying to split the French Committee for National Liberation, force out the supporters of General de Gaulle, and create a committee subservient to the Western Allies.

The heroic efforts of the French resistance and the firm stance of Soviet diplomacy for the recognition of the French Committee for National Liberation finally compelled the United States to yield. All the same, neither the British nor the American drafts for an act of recognition were acceptable to the Soviet government, inasmuch as both infringed on the national interests of the French people. Thus it was agreed that the USSR, the USA, and Britain would make their relevant statements separately, but on the same day—August 26, 1943.

The Western Allies also pursued their own aims in the conduct of the war in the Pacific, the East and South-East Asia. Despite earlier decisions to regard Nazi Germany as the greatest enemy, certain prominent figures in the USA insisted very energetically that efforts be concentrated on the Pacific theatre. But Roosevelt, who had a realistic understanding of the prospects for the development of the Second World War, refused to accept the arguments of those who upheld the "Pacific strategy"; he considered such conceptions a danger to the entire American policy. The politicians who stood with the President realised that Hitler's Germany was much stronger than Japan, and that it was the Nazis who must be crushed first.

The ruling quarters in the USA planned to make the great-

est possible use of the resources of countries in the East and South-East Asia in the war against Japan, and hoped eventually to lay their hands on these rich areas. They indulged in demagogic sloganeering about anti-colonialism, but could not make up their minds to press their British partner on independence for India and other British possessions. As for Churchill, he openly favoured preserving Britain's colonial overlordship.

Crossing the Border

In the first half of July, 1944, the forces of the First Baltic Front advanced as much as 140 kilometres, opening up the approaches to East Prussia. The German command concentrated large forces in this sector and assembled in the region of Vilnius units from the Third Panzer Army that had been forced to retreat. The city's garrison numbered 15,000 officers and men, and several additional divisions were brought up. But all efforts to halt the advance of the Soviet forces were unsuccessful; in five days of hard fighting, units of the Red Army destroyed the enemy's grouping and on July 13 liberated Vilnius.

Thereafter the enemy's strategic front collapsed. Pursuing the retreating foe, the Red Army liberated nearly all of Byelorussia and a large part of Lithuania, advancing to the west as much as 500 kilometres.

The forces of the First Byelorussian Front, after liberating Byelorussia, moved in the general direction of Warsaw. On July 31, the Second Tank Army joined battle on the near approaches to Praga, Warsaw's suburb. The 8th Guards' and the 69th Armies of the First Byelorussian Front's left wing forced the Vistula south of Warsaw and seized a bridgehead on the river's western bank in the days between July 27 and August 4. Fierce battles ensued to reinforce and enlarge these footholds.

During July and August, the First Baltic and First, Second, and Third Byelorussian fronts achieved notable successes. Fighting determinedly, they advanced from 260 to 400 kilometres and extended the length of the offensive front to 1,000 kilometres. But increasing enemy resistance, together with our greatly extended lines of communication and the fatigue of the troops, who had been fighting their way forward for more than two months without any respite, made it necessary to halt the offensive. On

August 29, the forces of the four fronts received an order from Supreme Command General Headquarters to take the defensive on the front from Jelgava to Józefów. The grand offensive begun on June 23 in the central sector of the Soviet-German front had been concluded. Only a small part of the forces of the First and Second Byelorussian fronts continued offensive actions in September.

According to the August 29 directives from Supreme Command General Headquarters, the armies of the Second Byelorussian Front's left wing were to reach the Narew River on September 4 or 5, seize a bridgehead in the neighbourhood of Ostrolęka, and go over to the defensive. At the same time the armies on the right wing of the First Byelorussian Front were to advance throughout its entire length to the Narew, seize bridgeheads to its west, and take the defensive. Both fronts had fulfilled their assignments by mid-September, by which time Soviet forces had liberated Praga, a suburb of Warsaw.

One of the main results of the victories won in the central sector of the front in July and August of 1944 was the liberation of nearly all Polish lands east of the Vistula by the Red Army, with the Polish army fighting at its side. This territory made up one-fourth of Poland; its population in 1944 was some 5.6 million.

Soviet troops entered Polish territory under political conditions that were largely favourable thanks to the long struggle of the population against the Nazi aggressors. The patriots of Poland had refused to accept the blood-stained fascist occupation which had destroyed their national independence.

By 1943 the Polish Workers' Party, by directing its efforts towards the consolidation of democratic forces, had brought about conditions making it possible to form an anti-fascist national front. Meanwhile, significant changes had taken place in Poland's class make-up. Having become convinced that the Polish Workers' Party was pursuing the right policy, broad masses of workers, peasants, and the intelligentsia gave it ever more vigorous support in its struggle for unity of action in the national liberation movement.

In November of 1943, the Polish Workers' Party issued the declaration "What We Are Fighting For". This historic document set forth a programme for creating a new Poland, a country belonging to the Polish people. On December 15, 1943, on the

initiative of the Polish Workers' Party, the country's democratic, public, political, and military organisations published a Manifesto that spoke of creating a supreme governing body for the Polish people and set forth its overall political platform.

In the early hours of January 1, 1944, the *Krajowa Rada Narodowa* (KRN) was formed on the basis of that platform. The KRN was the highest representative body of the country's underground democratic forces. Its principal organiser was the Polish Workers' Party; among the others who had a part in creating it were members of the left wing of the Workers' Party of Polish Socialists and representatives of the *Stronnictwo Ludowe* (Peasants' Party), of democratic groups, youth organisations, trade unions, and other public organisations. Boleslaw Bierut, one of the leaders of the Polish Workers' Party, was elected chairman of the KRN.

The extensive organising and political work of the Polish Workers' Party and the KRN raised the national liberation movement to a new level; it began to develop into a popular-democratic revolution. The armed struggle of the Polish patriots intensified, in no little measure due to the formation of the *Armia Ludowa* by a decree of the KRN of January 1, 1944.

In the spring of that year a delegation representing the KRN came to Moscow. It acquainted the leaders of the Soviet government with the situation in Poland, the course of the struggle for national liberation, and the prospects for its development, and also spoke of the urgent need of the *Armia Ludowa* for arms and ammunition. Questions concerning cooperation between the Red Army and the *Armia Ludowa*, and all-round assistance for the latter, were discussed. Beginning with April of 1944, the Polish patriots received from the Soviet Union large consignments of submachine-guns, ammunition, and explosives as well as heavy machine guns and anti-tank weapons. All of this was delivered through the Polish headquarters of the partisan movement, and also through Soviet partisan units and detachments operating in Polish territory occupied by Hitler's armies.

At the same time, another major armed organisation existed in Poland: the *Armia Krajowa*, under orders from the émigré government in London. Its leaders were rabid reactionaries who wanted to restore the old order in the country under the domination of the bourgeoisie and the land-owning aristocracy. The

Polish Workers' Party and the Armia Ludowa called repeatedly for unity of action and an effective concerted struggle against the fascist aggressors; the answer of the Armia Krajowa's leadership was to step up actions against the Polish Workers' Party and the country's democratic forces. It tried to make a show of fighting against the fascist armies of occupation while husbanding its strength for an armed seizure of power when the Germans withdrew from Polish territory. Openly reactionary elements, headed by Kazimierz Sosnkowski (the commander-in-chief of the émigré government's armed forces), and the leaders of the Armia Krajowa in Poland, intended to break off the struggle against the Germans and prepare all forces for armed resistance to the approaching Soviet forces.

Under the cover of demagoguery about "protecting the people from subversive elements", the reactionaries of the Armia Krajowa and of the Narodowy Siły Zbrojne, a fascist organisation incorporated into the Armia Krajowa in March of 1944, murdered genuine Polish patriots.

The émigré government was supported in its subversive activities by the ruling quarters in the USA and Britain, who wanted to bring back the old, bourgeois Poland and turn it into an anti-Soviet stronghold. On November 16, 1943, the émigré government sent a memorandum to Churchill asking for a guarantee of its right to take power in Poland as the country was being liberated. On January 5, 1944, it demanded that it be allowed to set up its administration in the western regions of the Ukraine and Byelorussia immediately after the Nazi occupying armies were driven out. The USSR decisively rejected these claims. In a special statement made on January 11, 1944, the Soviet government exposed the anti-people policies of the Polish émigré government, which had drawn away from the people and proved unable to lead them into an active struggle against the Nazi aggressors. The statement said that both Poland and the Soviet Union had an interest in establishing a lasting friendship between their two peoples and uniting them in the fight against the common enemy, as was also demanded by the common cause of all the Allies.

It was precisely at this period that the Western powers were doing their best to pressure Moscow on the "Polish question".

A Sharp Exchange in the Kremlin

Averell Harriman devotes much space in his memoirs to the problem of Poland. Thus he writes that during his visit to the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs on January 18, 1944, he was primarily interested in what possibilities the Soviet government saw for settling the Polish question.

Molotov answered that the émigré government in London would have to be reconstructed to include Poles living in Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union. Its members, he said, must be "honest men", who were "not tainted with fascism", and had a friendly attitude towards the Soviet Union.¹

As possible members of the new Polish government Molotov mentioned Professor Oskar Lange, a Polish economist who at that time was lecturing at the University of Chicago; Orleanski, a Catholic parish priest in Springfield; and Krzycki, a trade union leader who was then national chairman of the American Slav Congress. Molotov added that Mikolajczyk could remain in the government, but expressed doubts about Tadeusz Romer, then Poland's minister of foreign affairs. Harriman promised to inform Washington of these views.

Soon afterwards the US government issued Lange and Orleanski passports for a trip to the Soviet Union. The two men visited Moscow and took part in a discussion concerning the new make-up of the Polish government.

On March 3 Harriman visited Stalin, once again on the Polish question. After an exchange of greetings, Harriman said that the President had instructed him to talk about Poland. It was the opinion of the US government, he said, that the problem had become urgent. He promised to be brief.

Stalin objected, saying it was "not a question of time". The Soviet government, he said, had taken its position and would stand by it. Moscow insisted on the Curzon line. But the London Poles evidently "took the Russians for fools": they were now demanding Wilno and Lwow. Fortunately, though, the Polish people, who should not be identified with the émigré government, had a different attitude. The Red Army would be welcomed as a liberator by the Poles.

¹ Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, p. 322.

Harriman, of course, understood the essence of this matter. He himself, as recently as January of that year, had told W. Lawrence of *The New York Times* that "the Soviets don't trust the Polish Government in London at all and, from their standpoint, I think, they are reasonable in this distrust".¹

Harriman also told American reporters at that time: "I don't know what the Poles in Poland think. We know very well what the Polish Government in London thinks. It is predominantly a group of aristocrats, looking to the Americans and the British to restore their position and landed properties and the feudalistic system of the period before and after the last war. They have a basic suspicion of the Soviets. . . They think the only future of Poland lies in Great Britain and the United States fighting Russia to protect Poland. I don't see that we have any interest in getting back to that kind of thing."²

In this conversation with Stalin, however, the American ambassador, acting on instructions from Washington, tried to get Moscow to resume negotiations with the London government, whose political platform he had characterised so penetratingly for the press not long before. Harriman now decided to invoke the authority of his president. Roosevelt, he said, was worried that if the problem were not solved quickly a civil war would break out in Poland. Stalin answered that he saw no such danger. Civil war with whom? Between whom? After all, Mikolajczyk had no troops.

Harriman then asked about the underground force known as the Armia Krajowa, and Stalin replied that the Polish government might have a certain number of agents in Poland, but the membership of its underground organisations was insignificant.

When Harriman asked what sort of solution Stalin could envisage, this was the answer: "While the Red Army is liberating Poland, Mikolajczyk will go on repeating his platitudes. By the time Poland is liberated, Mikolajczyk's government will have changed, or another government will have emerged in Poland."³

Harriman said Roosevelt was worried that a new regime formed on the basis of the Soviet proposals might turn out to be a "hand-picked government with no popular movement behind it".

¹ Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, p. 290.

² *Ibid.*, p. 291.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 315-16.

To this Stalin answered that all he thought necessary was to keep the Polish landlords, the "Polish Tories", from coming back. "Poland needs democrats who will look after the interests of the people," Stalin said, "not Tory landlords".¹

He added that he did not believe Churchill, who himself was a British Tory, would succeed in persuading the London Poles to reorganise their government and change their policies. He was sure, however, that Roosevelt would agree Poland needed a democratic government.

Harriman was later to complain that high-placed politicians in Washington did not show sufficient energy at this time. Secretary of State Hull was not inclined to heed Harriman's advice about the need to get concessions from the Kremlin before it was too late. Roosevelt was looking ahead to the 1944 presidential election. Fearing the predictable wrath of voters of Polish origin, he avoided taking any clear-cut position.

The same could certainly not be said of Churchill. In a series of messages from him to Stalin, and likewise in statements by British Ambassador Clark Kerr, repeated threats were made against the Soviet Union. The Soviet government was forced to react. In a letter to Churchill dated March 23, a copy of which was sent to Roosevelt the same day, Stalin pointed out that such a tone was inappropriate.

"I was struck by the fact," Stalin wrote, "that both your messages and particularly Kerr's statement bristle with threats against the Soviet Union. I should like to call your attention to this circumstance because threats as a method are not only out of place in relations between Allies, but also harmful, for they may lead to opposite results."

The letter further noted that in one of his messages the Prime Minister had characterised the Soviet side's upholding of the Curzon line as a policy of force. Moreover, the British government, despite the agreement reached in Teheran, was now claiming that the question of the Soviet-Polish border was not settled and would have to be held in abeyance until the armistice conference was convened.

"I think there is a misunderstanding here," Stalin wrote. "The Soviet Union is not waging nor does it intend to wage war

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 316.

against Poland. It has no conflict with the Polish people and considers itself an ally of Poland and the Polish people. That is why it is shedding its blood to free Poland from German oppression. It would be strange, therefore, to speak of an armistice between the USSR and Poland. But the Soviet Union is in conflict with the Polish émigré government which does not represent the interest of the Polish people or express their aspirations."¹

Referring to Churchill's declaration that he intended to tell the House of Commons that all territorial changes had been set aside until the armistice or until a peace conference was held among the victorious powers and that Britain would not recognise "any forcible transferences of territory", Stalin warned the Prime Minister against such actions. "As I see it," he wrote, "you make the Soviet Union appear as being hostile to Poland, and virtually deny the liberation nature of the war waged by the Soviet Union against German aggression. That is tantamount to attributing to the Soviet Union something which is non-existent, and, thereby, discrediting it. I have no doubt that the peoples of the Soviet Union and world public opinion will evaluate your statement as a gratuitous insult to the Soviet Union."²

The excerpts cited show how heated polemics on the Polish question sometimes became. And of course this could not help but poison the atmosphere within the anti-Hitler coalition.

Churchill had run into stout resistance and was forced to soften his tone. Nonetheless, the Western Allies continued to pressure Moscow on the Polish question in the months that followed. But the Red Army's successes on the front and the ever growing military might of the USSR made it useless for the Western Allies to try to extract concessions from the Soviet Union by means of threats.

On the Threshold of Victory

The Warsaw Uprising

After his brief visit in London Harriman arrived in Washington, where he was immediately received by the President. Roosevelt listened with attention to the ambassador's account of the

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. I, pp. 212-13.

² *Ibid.*, p. 213.

mood in the British capital, particularly in regard to the Polish problem. It made no particular impression on him, however: in the course of the discussion that followed, Roosevelt repeated to Harriman his previous position, the essence of which was that the Polish émigré government must be reorganised so as to bring about conditions favourable to lasting friendship between Poland and the Soviet Union.

Harriman returned to Moscow, and on June 3 met with Molotov, who asked whether the President's position on the Polish question had changed since it was discussed in Teheran. Harriman said everything remained as before, and added that the President hoped Marshal Stalin too would continue to adhere to the position agreed on at the Big Three conference.

In the latter part of July Mikolajczyk, Grabski, and Romer came to Moscow as representatives of the Polish émigré government. Mikolajczyk met with Molotov, and asked at once to see Stalin. It was recommended to him, however, that first he talk with the representatives of the Krajowa Rada Narodowa, who, as Molotov stressed, were best informed about conditions in Poland.

The Moscow talks with representatives of the Polish government in London began in a businesslike and constructive atmosphere, but were immediately complicated by a new circumstance that was fraught with serious consequences. A rebellion had begun in Warsaw. It was inspired by the émigré government, and clearly timed to coincide with the Moscow visit of Mikolajczyk and his colleagues.

On August 3, Mikolajczyk, Grabski, and Romer were received by Stalin. The official communiqué issued afterwards said that "the conversation concerned the state of affairs in Poland and Soviet-Polish relations. Comrade Stalin expressed the desire to see questions related to the situation in Poland resolved by the Poles themselves, and urged Mr. Mikolajczyk to discuss them with the Polish Committee for National Liberation".

Harriman gives a more detailed account of the meeting based on what Mikolajczyk told him. Mentioning the uprising that had just begun in Warsaw, the Polish émigré leader told Soviet representatives that "Warsaw will be free any day".

"God grant that it be so," Stalin replied. After a pause, he continued: "What kind of an army is it—without artillery, tanks,

air force? They do not even have enough hand weapons. In modern war this is nothing... I hear that the Polish Government instructed these units to chase the Germans out of Warsaw. I don't understand how they can do it. They don't have sufficient strength for that."

Mikolajczyk asked whether the Soviet Union would aid the uprising by supplying arms, and was told that the émigré government would first have to reach an understanding with the Polish Committee for National Liberation.¹

Thus the émigré leaders received clear warning that unwarranted actions by them in Polish territory could not result in anything good. The Warsaw rebellion was precisely such an action. It represented an attempt to ignore the way events were unfolding in Poland and to bring about a situation whereby the Red Army, upon entering Warsaw, would be confronted by emissaries of the government which had sat by in the safety of London while Soviet soldiers shed their blood in the name of freedom and independence for the Polish people.

Meanwhile, there had been important changes in the way things stood in Poland. On July 21, the Krajowa Rada Narodowa had promulgated a law forming a Polish Committee for National Liberation—a central governing body for the country. The committee was made up of representatives of the Polish Workers', Socialist, Peasants' and Democratic parties, of persons without party affiliation, and members of the Union of Polish Patriots in the USSR. On July 22, 1944, the committee adopted a manifesto that played an historic role in the building of a democratic Poland. The document set forth a programme for revolutionary transformations and outlined the prospects for a popular revolution.

The Polish Committee for National Liberation declared that the Red Army had entered Poland as an army of liberation, and called on the people to render it all possible aid. The manifesto proclaimed firm alliance and friendship with the Soviet Union as the foundation of the new Polish state's foreign policy.

"For 400 years," the manifesto said, "there have been ceaseless conflicts between Poles and Ukrainians, Poles and Byelorussians, Poles and Russians—all to the detriment of both sides.

¹ Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, pp. 333-34.

An historic turning point has now been reached in these relations: conflict is giving way to friendship and cooperation dictated by the vital interests of all sides. Friendship and combat cooperation founded on the comradeship-in-arms of the Polish Army and the Red Army should develop into a lasting alliance and good neighbourly cooperation after the war."

On July 26, 1944, the government of the USSR and the Polish Committee for National Liberation concluded an agreement on relations between the Soviet Commander-in-Chief and the Polish Administration after the Red Army's entry into Polish territory. The intent of the agreement was to ensure concerted action on the battlefield by the Polish and Soviet peoples. It stipulated that as the enemy was driven back the Polish Committee for National Liberation would set up administrative bodies and guide them, at the same time taking measures to organise and build up the Polish armed forces. Polish units formed on the territory of the USSR were to be active in Poland. Article 6 of the agreement stated that "as soon as any part of the liberated territory of Poland ceases to be a zone of combat operations, the Polish Committee for National Liberation will take full control of civil administration".

But work towards creating and strengthening administrative bodies for Poland and towards developing the Polish armed forces, encountered serious difficulties. This was to a considerable degree due to the country's grave economic situation after the long years of Nazi occupation. The hostile machinations of the Polish reactionaries were also a factor. The émigré government and its adherents within the country tried to keep Poles from joining the army, urged them to boycott the measures of the Polish Committee for National Liberation, and encouraged desertion. The London émigrés sent their men to join the army with the intent of undermining its fighting capacity.

At the same time, the Polish reactionaries hastily took a number of countermeasures, chief among which was organising the Warsaw uprising. The high command of the Armia Krajowa, which was controlled by the London émigré government, wanted to establish itself in Warsaw at least twelve hours before Soviet forces entered the city in order to claim political and administrative authority for itself.

The Warsaw uprising began on August 1, just a few days

after the premier of the émigré government, Mikolajczyk, came to Moscow for negotiations with the Polish Committee for National Liberation concerning a reorganisation of the government. Reactionary groups in Poland hoped that the uprising in Warsaw would strengthen Mikolajczyk's position at the Moscow talks. This explains his intractability: refusing to reckon with the radical political changes that had taken place in Poland by the summer of 1944, he demanded that the émigrés be given 80 per cent of the places in the new government and insisted that the reactionary constitution of 1935 be preserved. Naturally, the Polish Committee for National Liberation could not agree to these unrealistic claims.

As for the uprising in Warsaw, the hopes that Polish reactionaries placed in it proved vain. This was primarily because the uprising itself was a sheer gamble. It was not prepared either militarily or technically. The rebels did not have enough arms, and their ammunition was sufficient for only two or three days. Furthermore, many underground organisations were not aware of the time for which the action was planned. As a result, only 40 per cent of the forces which the Armia Krajowa had at its disposal in Warsaw were involved at the start of the uprising. It is not surprising that the effort misfired in its very first hours. The rebels were unable to win the capital's key positions or to seize railway stations and bridges across the Vistula; this made it possible for the German command to bring up its forces.

And yet the fighting went on. It burst forth with new strength as the people of Warsaw joined in. Residents of the capital and ordinary soldiers in the Armia Krajowa, ignorant of the real aims behind the rebellion, fought courageously against the Nazi forces of occupation. Although the command of the Armia Ludowa units had not been informed by the leadership of the Armia Krajowa of the upcoming uprising, they also took part in the fighting. Polish Communists, seeing that an armed uprising was hopeless under the circumstances, nevertheless decided to fight in it so as not to separate themselves from the mass struggle of the people. The Polish patriots displayed heroism and selflessness in their fight against the German aggressors. Even the German high command was forced to acknowledge, in a secret directive dated August 21, 1944, that the rebels were fighting, "fiercely and fanatically".

But the forces were too unequal. The rebels suffered grievous losses because of their lack of heavy guns and of combat experience. In the latter half of August their situation rapidly deteriorated. The Nazis barbarically destroyed the city; Hitler had ordered that Warsaw be razed.

The memoirs of some Western politicians contain not a few charges and accusations against the Soviet Union for not immediately coming to the aid of the Warsaw rebels, and thus leaving the Poles to fight against overwhelming Nazi forces. Such recriminations are groundless, however. The Soviet government had no advance knowledge of the action, and learned of it only when the fighting broke out. Having received and studied the first data on the uprising, the Soviet government adopted an unambiguous stand. A message to the British government on August 16, 1944, said that "the Warsaw action is a reckless and fearful gamble, taking a heavy toll of the population. This would not have been the case had Soviet headquarters been informed beforehand about the Warsaw action and had the Poles maintained contact with them".¹

Such was the Soviet government's principled stand on the Warsaw uprising. However, seeing that tens of thousands of Warsaw's patriots were involved—having been led into mortal peril by Polish reactionaries pursuing their own selfish aims—the Soviet government did everything it could to help the rebels.

Western publications likewise contain a good many imputations to the effect that the Soviet command intentionally halted its forces outside the walls of Warsaw and thus condemned the uprising to failure. Charges of this sort have no basis in the facts, and anyone who takes the trouble to consider carefully the position and possibilities of the Red Army at the time the uprising began will be forced to admit as much.

In the second half of July, 1944, the forces of the First Byelorussian and the First Ukrainian fronts entered Poland and began to develop an offensive in the direction of the Vistula in accordance with the plans of Supreme Command General Headquarters. By the end of the month—before the start of the uprising in Warsaw—this drive had begun to slow down. The German

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. I, p. 254.

command had placed considerable reserve forces in the way of the Soviet armies, which were meeting with ever greater resistance.

The pace of the offensive was also affected by the heavy losses that Soviet infantry divisions and tank corps had suffered in previous battles. Artillery and logistic services were lagging behind, and the troops did not have enough ammunition or fuel. The infantry and tanks were not receiving fire support from the artillery, and the effectiveness of the air force had been reduced by the move to new bases.

After their forty-day offensive, the Soviet armies, faced with increasing resistance, were not capable of pushing forward rapidly and actively supporting the rebels. This was apparent even to the German command; General Kurt von Tippelskirch, for example, writes that "the rebellion broke out on August 1, when the force of the Russian advance had already spent itself".¹

Nonetheless, despite the difficult situation, the Soviet command took measures to aid the rebels. At the beginning of September it concentrated a considerable force on the eastern bank of the Vistula in the neighbourhood of Praga, a Warsaw suburb where enemy forces had been weakened by transfers of tank divisions meant to destroy Soviet bridgeheads south of Warsaw. On September 10, the 47th Army of the First Byelorussian Front, reinforced by one Polish division, took the offensive. The enemy was crushed after fierce fighting, and on September 14 Soviet forces liberated the Praga suburb of Warsaw. The situation in the Warsaw sector of the front thus improved markedly, and it became possible to aid the rebels directly. This task was entrusted to the First Army of the Woisko Polskie. On September 15 it entered Praga and began preparations for forcing the Vistula and seizing a bridgehead in Warsaw.

On the night of September 15, the First Army began to force the Vistula. From September 16 through 19, as many as six infantry battalions were landed in Warsaw. The officers and men of the Polish army fought heroically and selflessly, but the enemy, making use of strong defences, prevented the units that had crossed the river from broadening the footholds they had gained into an extensive bridgehead. Another reason for the operation's

¹ Kurt von Tippelskirch, *Geschichte des Zweiten Weltkriegs*, Berlin, Athenäum-Verlag, 1956, p. 472.

failure was that the leaders of the uprising were unwilling to organise joint actions between their own forces and the Polish units fighting on the regained bridgeheads. The enemy launched furious counterattacks using infantry and tanks, and in the end succeeded in splitting the units that had made the crossing and depriving them of mutual support. The situation became so grave that the command of the First Army decided to evacuate its forces from Warsaw onto the eastern bank of the Vistula. This evacuation had been accomplished, with great losses, by September 23.

Meanwhile the Soviet command, after the capture of Praga, gave continual material and technical aid to the rebels. On the eve of the forcing of the Vistula in the Warsaw area the Council of War of the First Byelorussian Front charged the 16th Air Army with the task of delivering arms, ammunition, foodstuffs, and medicines to the rebels. Once contact had been made with the rebels, the Soviet air force, beginning from September 14, made regular airdrops in the neighbourhood of Warsaw.

At the very time that units of the First Army of the Woisko Polskie were shedding their blood in battle so as to aid the rebels, the command of the Armia Krajowa refused to conduct joint actions with the Red Army. A representative of the Soviet command visited the rebels' headquarters to look into the possibility of lending them assistance, but the commandant of the Warsaw district of the Armia Krajowa was reluctant to discuss coordinated actions with the Red Army. Seeing that the position of the rebels had become utterly hopeless, the Red Army's commanders suggested that the rebel leaders take the only reasonable way out: a breakthrough to the Vistula under the cover of Soviet air and artillery support. But the rebel leaders forbade their forces to go out to meet the Red Army. Only a few units refused to comply with this suicidal order and succeeded in fighting their way out of Warsaw. On October 2, 1944, the Armia Krajowa's commander signed an act of capitulation to the Nazis.

The Polish people paid a high price for the unconscionable gamble of the émigré government. Huge losses were suffered by the Armia Krajowa, the Armia Ludowa, and the civilian population. The destruction to which the city was subjected was indescribable. On the one hand, the Warsaw uprising demonstrated the selflessness and heroism of the rebels in the struggle

against the occupying forces; on the other, it was a criminal act of an anti-Soviet policy pursued by the government of Mikolajczyk and those leaders of the London émigré government who were in Poland.

The Vistula-Oder operation, in which the liberation of Warsaw was included, was one of the largest strategic actions of the war. It was conducted in the principal Warsaw-Berlin sector by the First Byelorussian and the First Ukrainian fronts, and by a part of the forces of the Fourth Ukrainian Front. The First Army of the Woisko Polskie also took part in it, and vigorous assistance was furnished by the Second Byelorussian Front, which was active in the direction of East Prussia.

The political aim of the operation was to complete the Polish people's liberation from oppression by the Nazi invaders and help them build a strong, independent, and democratic state. The accomplishment of this at a time earlier than planned served as yet another proof of the Soviet Union's unswerving faithfulness to its obligations as an ally.

While preparations were being made for a new offensive, active work was conducted among the Polish population. The fundamental document that determined the content and form of this work was the July 26, 1944, statement of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the USSR on the Soviet Union's attitude to Poland and the agreement between the government of the USSR and the Polish Committee for National Liberation on relations between the Soviet Commander-in-Chief and the Polish Administration after the entry of Soviet forces into Polish territory. The agreement helped to establish friendly relations between the Soviet forces and the government bodies created by the Polish Committee for National Liberation.

Soviet forces were engaged in combat operations on the Vistula from 12 to 15 January, 1945. The enemy put up a stubborn resistance, but the Soviet forces succeeded in breaking through the defences. Artillery destroyed all the main enemy targets. In four days of offensive actions, the strike force of the First Ukrainian Front advanced 80 to 100 kilometres. The First Army of the Woisko Polskie broke through into Warsaw in the morning of January 17, together with units of the 61st and 47th Soviet armies. That same day, after intense fighting within the city itself, the Polish capital was completely liberated by the

Polish and Soviet troops. The scene which confronted them was one of horror: the Nazis had turned whole regions of the city into heaps of rubble. It was difficult even to imagine that one day Warsaw would rise again from those ruins.

The Americans Analyse the Situation

The confrontation that had arisen from polemics over the Polish question prompted the Americans to consider how they should proceed in their overall relations with the Soviet Union, and what the prospects were for those relations. In analysing the situation, the men in Washington could not fail to see that attempts to put pressure on Moscow had fallen through. The Soviet government, despite all the attempts of American and British politicians, had stood resolutely by its principles: the new Poland that was to be born of the ashes and ruins must be a truly independent and democratic state, friendly towards the Soviet Union and free of the intrigues of the Western powers, who still clung to their idea of setting up a *cordon sanitaire* and fomenting discord, in their own selfish interests, among the states of Europe. The failure of attempts to carry out this plan in relation to Poland disconcerted statesmen in Washington and London. They had not expected that the Soviet Union, which had suffered severe trials and terrible destruction, and lost millions and millions of its citizens in the fight against the Nazi aggressors, would resist pressures from the Western powers so resolutely. Given the way things had turned out, though, the question arose of how the USA and Britain ought to approach the question of relations with their Soviet ally in the future.

The most reasonable course would have been to recognise the need for cooperation on an equal footing, taking into consideration the legitimate interests of all sides. Such was, indeed, the tenor of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, which held firmly to the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence between states with different social systems. As the facts show, however, the leaders of the Western powers at that time were not prepared to adopt this policy, even if it was the only realistic one. Some influential figures in Washington, and likewise their British colleagues, were prisoners to the illusion of American "greatness"; they were incapable of setting aside the double standard they ap-

plied to themselves on the one hand and to the Soviet Union on the other. This attitude was very clearly reflected in a telegram that the US ambassador in Moscow, Averell Harriman, sent to Washington on September 10, 1944. Harriman formulated his thoughts after carefully analysing the current state of American-Soviet relations and thinking over the different steps the Western powers might take in the future in order to make Moscow more "tractable".

Harriman pointed out in this telegram, which was addressed to Harry Hopkins, that as the end of the war drew nearer, the question of relations with the Soviet Union took on paramount importance. "I have been conscious since early in the year," Harriman wrote, "of a division among . . . Stalin's advisers on the question of cooperation with us [i.e. the USA—*Author*]. It is now my feeling that those who oppose the kind of cooperation we expect have recently been getting their way and the policy appears to be crystallizing to force us and the British to accept all Soviet policies, backed by the strength and prestige of the Red Army.

"Demands on us are becoming insistent. You have seen a part of it in the negotiations over financial terms of the (Lend-Lease) Protocol in Washington. We have other examples here. The general attitude seems to be that it is our obligation to help Russia and accept her policies because she has won the war for us."¹

It is an interesting premise that Harriman proceeds from here. As an experienced diplomat and a man with a historical perspective, understanding that a day will finally come when his secret messages become publicly known, he avoids speaking directly about what is troubling him. Even in a personal telegram to one of the President's closest advisers, Harriman shrinks from committing to paper his innermost thoughts on the limitations that the Soviet Union might place on the unbounded dominance of the USA after the war. A diplomat of vast experience, he veils the true meaning of his words with allusions to putative divisions within the Soviet government and the supposed ascendancy in Moscow of those who oppose the cooperation after the war that Washington ostensibly desires. He is sure, though, that Hopkins will understand him: the crux of the matter, after all,

¹ Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, p. 344.

is the basis on which such cooperation is to develop. And that is readily apparent from the rest of the telegram's text.

"I am convinced," writes Harriman, "that we can divert this trend but only if we materially change our policy toward the Soviet Government. I have evidence that they have misinterpreted our generous attitude toward them as a sign of weakness, and acceptance of their policies. Time has come when we must make clear what we expect of them as the price of our goodwill. Unless we take issue with the present policy there is every indication the Soviet Union will become a world bully wherever their interests are involved. This policy will reach into China and the Pacific as well when they can turn their attention in that direction. No written agreements can be of any value unless they are carried out in a spirit of give and take, and recognition of the interests of other people."¹

The meaning Harriman attached to talk about a "spirit of give and take" and "recognition of the interests of other people" was a narrowly particular one, of course. For example, the far-flung possessions of the USA and Great Britain, including those in the Pacific, lay outside the question, as he saw it, as did their global economic and financial positions and their having long since made certain that their neighbours were mainly "friendly" countries. All of this was taken for granted, so to speak. But when the Soviet Union undertook measures to guarantee its security and national interests, the Western powers, rather than recognising these natural aspirations, insisted that Moscow would have to give something in return. Essentially the same attitude continues to exist even today. Washington is "indignant", for example, when Cuban troops come to the aid of the people of Angola in their just struggle at the request of that country's lawful government, while considering it quite natural for American troops to be maintained on Cuban territory at the base in Guantanamo.

Let us return, however, to Harriman's telegram. He wrote:

"I am disappointed but not discouraged. The job of getting the Soviet Government to play a decent role in international affairs is, however, going to be more difficult than we had hoped. The favorable factors are still the same. Ninety per cent of the

¹ *Ibid.*

Russian people want friendship with us and it is much to the interest of the Soviet Government to develop it. It is our problem to strengthen the hand of those around Stalin who want to play the game along our lines and to show Stalin that the advice of the counsellors of a tough policy is leading him into difficulties."¹

In the same message, Harriman asked permission to come to Washington and personally present to Roosevelt his ideas about the further conduct of affairs with Moscow. But at the time the White House was more concerned over the difficulties of fighting the Japanese militarists in the Pacific. Roosevelt considered it highly important to obtain the help of the Soviet Union in this struggle, and thus showed no particular interest in Harriman's suggestions for working out a "hard line" towards the USSR. Hopkins answered Harriman on September 12. He said that although both he himself and the President were disposed to listen to Harriman it would be a mistake for the ambassador to leave Moscow at that moment. Hopkins advised Harriman to wait for the "green light" from Washington.²

Meanwhile the "Russian question" had been taken up in the State Department. Cordell Hull was not especially disturbed by the dispute over Poland. The Dumbarton Oaks Conference, however, made it plain to him that the Soviet Union would have to be taken seriously; there, despite the objections of the USA and Britain, based on their awareness that most of the UN members at that time were following in the wake of Anglo-American policy, the Soviet Union insisted on a rule of unanimity among the great powers in the Security Council.

This prompted Hull to ask Harriman for his thoughts on trends in Soviet policy. In his detailed reply, dated September 20, Harriman wrote:

"I believe the Soviets consider that we accepted at Moscow their position that although they would keep us informed they had the right to settle their problems with their western neighbors unilaterally... It can be argued that American interests need not be concerned over the affairs of this area. What frightens me, however, is that when a country begins to extend its influence by strong-arm methods beyond its borders under the

¹ Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, p. 345.

² *Ibid.*

guise of security it is difficult to see how a line can be drawn... At the present time I believe they certainly expect us to give them a free hand with their western neighbors. They are therefore most suspicious that this policy will be affected if they agree to refrain from voting [in the international] organisation—*Author*] on disputes in which the Soviet Government is involved.”¹

In Harriman’s opinion, the USA’s response to all of this should be a foreign policy that would show a definite interest in the resolution of problems involving each country as those problems arose, rather than giving the Russians “a free hand”. This, he wrote, might result in some unpleasant situations, but if the United States stood firm Moscow would be forced to give in.

Thus in his recommendations to the State Department, Harriman returned once again to the idea that the USA should take a “tougher” attitude towards the Soviet Union. The opinion of the British government was similar, as was demonstrated in the course of Prime Minister Churchill’s visit to Moscow in the autumn of 1944.

Talks Between Two Leaders

Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden, his Foreign Secretary, arrived in Moscow on the afternoon of October 9, 1944. A meeting with the head of the Soviet government was scheduled for the evening of that same day. Nonetheless, Churchill thought it necessary to meet with the American ambassador beforehand. During that meeting, Churchill expressed disappointment that Washington had declined to participate officially in the talks in Moscow. He promised to keep Harriman up to date despite this, and see to it that the American ambassador was invited to meetings including a broader range of participants. Still, Harriman was not present at most of the talks between Churchill and Stalin. Neither was he present at the first meeting, which took place in the Kremlin late in the evening of October 9, and which was to have considerable international repercussions. It was at this meeting that the Prime Minister

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 345-46.

undertook an action that he himself was later to call dirty and crude.

Churchill and Stalin met as old acquaintances: indeed, this was their third conference, and they had been in regular correspondence as well. Stalin inquired how the trip had been, and listened attentively to Churchill's account of the long flight. From this they went over to the Polish question, and agreed without any great difficulty that Mikolajczyk should be invited to Moscow for talks with representatives of the Polish Committee for National Liberation. Then Churchill took up the question that interested him most of all.

"Let us settle about our affairs in the Balkans," he said. "Your armies are in Rumania and Bulgaria. We have interests, missions, and agents there. Don't let us get at cross-purposes in small ways. So far as Britain and Russia are concerned, how would it do for you to have ninety per cent predominance in Rumania, for us to have ninety per cent of the say in Greece, and go fifty-fifty about Yugoslavia?"¹

While this was being translated into Russian, Churchill jotted down the percentages on a sheet of paper and held it out to Stalin over the table. Stalin glanced at the page and gave it back to Churchill. There was a pause. The sheet of paper lay on the table. Churchill did not touch it. Then he said:

"Might it not be thought rather cynical if it seemed we had disposed of these issues, so fateful to millions of people, in such an offhand manner? Let us burn the paper."

"No, you keep it," Stalin answered.²

Churchill folded the paper in half and tucked it into his pocket.

This incident was reflected in the message Churchill sent from Moscow to President Roosevelt two days later (October 11) only by the following remark: "It is absolutely necessary we should try to get a common mind about the Balkans, so that we may prevent civil war breaking out in several countries when, probably you and I would be in sympathy with one side and U.J. with the other. I shall keep you informed of all this, and nothing will be settled, except preliminary agreements between Britain

¹ Herbert Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin. The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1957, pp. 448, 449.

² *Ibid.*

and Russia, subject to further discussion and melting down with you. On this basis I am sure you will not mind our trying to have a full meeting of minds with the Russians."¹

On October 12, Harriman called on Churchill in his Moscow residence. It was late in the morning but the Prime Minister, as was his habit, was still in bed, dictating a letter. Harriman recalls: "He read me a letter he drafted for Stalin, giving his interpretation of the percentages." Harriman said that Roosevelt and Hull would react negatively to such a letter if it was sent. At that moment Eden came into the bedroom, and Churchill, turning to him, said: "Anthony, Averell doesn't think that we should send this letter to Stalin."² And thus the letter was never sent.

Afterwards there was a great deal of speculation, taking every possible form, with regard to the notorious sheet of paper Churchill had jotted on during the meeting in the Kremlin on October 9. It was claimed that London and Moscow had come to an understanding on the division of spheres of influence in the Balkans, and that this governed the conduct of the parties to the understanding in the course of later events. There are even some who conclude that if it were not for this understanding South-eastern Europe as a whole would have looked completely different after the war. In reality, there is no basis for giving such an interpretation to the incident. Even Churchill's description of what happened makes it clear that there was no hint of an understanding, let alone a formal agreement.

What actually occurred? Churchill wrote his percentages on a sheet of paper. Stalin glanced at them, and gave the sheet back to the Prime Minister without saying a word. Churchill suggested burning the paper, apparently thinking that if Stalin agreed this would make them accomplices in destroying a compromising document. Stalin, however, gave the British leader no grounds for this. He answered casually that Churchill might keep the paper, thus showing that he attached no particular importance to it. And that was the whole of it!

What conclusions can be drawn? Undoubtedly, Churchill wanted to create the impression that some sort of understanding

¹ *Roosevelt and Churchill. Their Secret Wartime Correspondence*, Doc. 443, p. 584.

² *Harriman and Abel, Op. cit.*, p. 358.

had been reached with the Soviet Union in order to justify the British government's attempts to establish its own influence in several regions of Europe. The long years of war and the horrors of fascist occupation had brought about an unprecedented upsurge in the liberation movement. Communists headed resistance forces everywhere and showed themselves to be the most stalwart foes of Nazi tyranny, thus winning the sympathy of the broad masses of the people. All this made it possible that after the occupying armies were driven out, the power in a number of countries might go to Communist parties that had the confidence of the popular masses. This frightened Churchill. His correspondence from this period with Eden and other members of the British cabinet contains not a few references to the possibility that Italy, France, Greece, and other countries might be "communised". He urged that action be taken to prevent this. It may well be that Churchill's motive in making his disreputable suggestion was to have a formal pretext for future meddling in the internal affairs of some countries and stamping out progressive movements. This is what actually happened in Greece, for example.

The Soviet Union, however, could never have been party to any such questionable "understanding". This would have been contrary to the fundamental principles of the Soviet Union's Leninist foreign policy, and first of all to the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations and of respect for their sovereign rights. It was, of course, impossible for the Soviet Union to accept the Prime Minister's suggestion, and thus to sanction the British imperialists' attempts to dictate their own will to liberated peoples.

It is also indicative that in the telegram Stalin and Churchill sent to Roosevelt on October 10 (the only joint message the two leaders sent to Washington during their talks in Moscow), they said only: "We have to consider the best way of reaching an agreed policy about the Balkan countries including Hungary and Turkey."¹

Harriman remarks in his memoirs that in the first draft of the joint message to Roosevelt the words, "having regard to our varying duties toward them", suggested by Churchill, con-

¹ Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, p. 357.

cluded the sentence just cited. On Stalin's insistence, they were dropped from the final version. Harriman writes that he told Stalin, during an official luncheon, that he knew about the first draft of the message and that Roosevelt would certainly be pleased that Stalin had suggested these words be deleted, since the President regarded it as highly important that all major questions be decided together by the Big Three. Harriman writes: "Stalin said he was glad to hear this and, reaching behind the Prime Minister's back, shook my hand."¹

The letter Stalin sent to Roosevelt on October 19, the day of Churchill's departure from Moscow, spoke only of an exchange of views. The letter said in part: "Ambassador Harriman will assuredly have informed you of all the important talks. I also know that the Prime Minister intended sending you his appraisal of the talks. For my part I can say that they were very useful in acquainting us with each other's views on such matters as the future of Germany, the Polish question, policy on the Balkans and major problems of future military policies. The talks made it plain that we can without undue difficulty coordinate our policies on all important issues and that even if we cannot ensure immediate solution of this or that problem, such as the Polish question, we have, nevertheless, more favourable prospects in this respect as well. A hope that the Moscow talks will be useful also in other respects, that when we three meet we shall be able to take specific decisions on all the pressing matters of common interest to us."² Neither at the Big Three Conference in Yalta nor in subsequent correspondence among the leaders, however, was the question of "percentages" touched upon.

All of this shows that the Soviet side had no intention of making a deal with London on dividing spheres of influence. Harriman writes of this episode: "I don't understand now, and I do not believe I understood at the time, just what Churchill thought he was accomplishing by these percentages. I know that he wanted a free hand in Greece, with the support of the United States, and that he wanted to have a hand in the development of the new Yugoslav Government, combining the government-in-exile in England with Tito and his group. Churchill cer-

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 165.

tainly knew that President Roosevelt insisted on keeping a free hand and wanted any decision deferred until the three could meet together. The interesting thing is that when they did meet, at Yalta, the question of percentages was never again raised.”¹

During Churchill’s visit to Moscow, representatives of the Polish Committee for National Liberation met several times with Mikolajczyk, who had come to the USSR for this purpose. The delegation of the Polish Committee for National Liberation, headed by Boleslaw Bierut, expressed willingness to reach agreement with representatives of the émigré government provided that the fascist-like constitution of 1935 was repealed and the 1921 constitution, which proclaimed elementary democratic freedoms, restored. Bierut remarked that his delegation had always seen the unification of the Polish people as its chief task and that in the name of that principle it was ready to support any genuine striving to realise this idea.

The delegation declared its desire to have a strong Poland, friendly towards the Soviet Union, with the Curzon line as its eastern boundary and a western boundary that would take in the lands historically belonging to Poland. It agreed to the formation of a Polish government of national unity headed by Mikolajczyk, provided that the majority of places in the government went to the Polish Committee for National Liberation. The Soviet government supported these positions. Mikolajczyk and the others who represented the émigré government, however, rejected these proposals out of hand. In order to win the day for their own ideas about the make-up of the new government, they attempted to engage in haggling over the Soviet-Polish border.

The stand the British Prime Minister took during these talks was an ambiguous one. On the one hand, Churchill declared that his government supported the proposal for establishing the border between the USSR and Poland at the Curzon line, and even said that this question had already been settled. When the Allies meet at the peace conference, he maintained, Britain would uphold Russia’s claim to the border, which had been agreed upon in Teheran. He added that this position had the support of the British cabinet.

¹ Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, p. 358.

On the other hand, Churchill (on October 16) submitted for consideration by the Soviet government the draft of an agreement that reflected only the views reached previously concerning the western Polish boundary. As for the eastern boundary, the draft proposal said that "the Polish Government accept the Curzon Line as the line of demarcation between Poland and the USSR."¹

The Soviet government could not agree to such an interpretation of the question. To call the Curzon line only a line of demarcation was unacceptable, since this would leave open the question of the border. As a result, no agreement was reached on the Polish question.

It should be noted, however, that the talks helped clarify positions on the Polish question, and raised hopes that a just settlement could be reached in the future.

In this connection the declaration on Soviet-Polish relations made by the government of the USSR as early as January 11, 1944, should be cited: "On January 5 in London the declaration of the émigré Polish Government was published on the question of Soviet-Polish relations, in which there are a number of incorrect assertions, including an incorrect assertion about the Soviet-Polish frontier. As is known the Soviet Constitution established the Soviet-Polish border in accordance with the will of the population of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia, expressed in a plebiscite which was carried out on a wide democratic basis in 1939. The territories of Western Ukraine, in which Ukrainians constitute the overwhelming majority of the population were incorporated in Soviet Ukraine, and the territories of Western Byelorussia, in which Byelorussians constitute the overwhelming majority of the population were incorporated in Soviet Byelorussia.

"The injustice committed by the Riga Treaty of 1921, which was imposed upon the Soviet Union in regard to the Ukrainians inhabiting Western Ukraine, and the Byelorussians inhabiting Western Byelorussia, was in this way rectified. The incorporation of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia in the Soviet Union not only did not violate the interests of Poland, but on the contrary—created a reliable basis for a solid and permanent

¹ *Documents on Polish-Soviet Relations, 1939-1945*, Vol. II, London, Heinemann, 1967, p. 428.

friendship between the Polish people and the neighbouring Ukrainian, Byelorussian, and Russian peoples.”¹

With regard to the Curzon line, the declaration further stated that “Poland’s Eastern frontiers can be established by agreement with the Soviet Union. The Soviet Government does not regard the 1939 frontiers as immutable. These frontiers can be modified in Poland’s favour so that areas in which the Polish population forms the majority can be turned over to Poland. In this case the Soviet-Polish frontier could pass approximately along the so-called Curzon Line which was adopted in 1919 by the Supreme Council of Allied Powers and which provides for the inclusion of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia in the Soviet Union.”²

Let us review the history of the Curzon line.

The question of Poland’s borders on the east was discussed at the Paris peace conference, which opened on January 18, 1919, and ended with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. A special commission for Polish affairs, headed by Jules Martin Cambon, the French ambassador to Germany, was set up at the conference. In working out a solution on the question of the Polish-Russian border, the commission was guided by the decision of the delegations from the principal Allied powers—Britain, France, the United States, Italy, and Japan—that only territories that were ethnically Polish should be included in Poland’s territory.

On this basis the territorial commission of the Paris peace conference worked out an eastern border for Poland that was agreed on by the Allied powers after the signing of the Versailles Peace Treaty and published in the Declaration of the Supreme Council of the Allied and United Powers Concerning the Provisional Eastern Border of Poland (December 8, 1919), over the signature of Georges Clemenceau, the chairman of the Supreme Council. In July of 1920 this same line was confirmed as Poland’s eastern boundary at a conference of the Allied powers in Spa; a note based on this decision was sent to the Soviet government on July 12, 1920, by George Curzon, the British Foreign Secretary.

¹ *Documents on Polish-Soviet Relations, 1939-1945*, Vol. II, London, Heinemann, 1967, pp. 132-33.

² *Ibid.*, p. 133.

In determining the Soviet-Polish border, the Supreme Council and the Spa conference proceeded from an ethnic principle: districts inhabited mainly by Poles were to fall to the west of the line, while districts inhabited mainly by Ukrainians and Byelorussians were to fall to the east of it.

The groups holding power in Poland, however, also laid claim to territories in the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia. In 1920, taking advantage of the economic and military difficulties of the newly formed Soviet republic, Poland attacked Soviet Russia. But Poland was given a powerful rebuff; when it was realised that the war which had been undertaken was hopeless, an appeal was made to the Allied governments to act as mediators in talks with Soviet Russia. It was at this time that Curzon sent to the Soviet government the note mentioned above, which proposed a Soviet-Polish border following what became known as the Curzon line.

The Polish government, however, refused to accept a border running along the Curzon line, and continued its war against Soviet Russia. At peace talks in Riga during March of 1921, Poland, by exploiting the difficulties confronting the Soviet republic, managed to impose another border, seizing for itself the western parts of the Soviet Ukraine and of Soviet Byelorussia. The injustice the Riga treaty represented to the Ukrainians inhabiting the Western Ukraine and the Byelorussians inhabiting Western Byelorussia was rectified only in 1939, when a new Soviet-Polish border was established in accordance with the will of the people living in these regions as expressed in a plebiscite conducted on a broad democratic basis.

The talks that took place between Polish leaders in Moscow during Churchill's visit opened the way to resolving this problem. Mikolajczyk, however, again adopted a negative position. He refused to recognise a Soviet-Polish border along the Curzon line, saying that he would have to consult with his colleagues in London. Moreover, he demanded not only the post of prime minister for himself but also 50 per cent of the places in the new government for the émigrés. Here, too, he was supported by Churchill. The representatives of the Polish Committee for National Liberation decisively rejected such importunities. In the end Mikolajczyk returned to London without any agreement having been reached.

Soviet leaders also exchanged views with Churchill on the conduct of military operations against the common enemy; on the whole, this had a positive effect on the further development of cooperation between the Allies.

During Churchill's stay in Moscow Stalin accepted an invitation to lunch at the British embassy, which at that time was on the Sofiiskaya Embankment, as it is now. As a rule, Stalin did not visit foreign embassies, but on this occasion he had evidently decided to show special favour to Churchill.

The atmosphere at the lunch, at which Ambassador Harriman was also present, was cordial and high-spirited. Stalin made a toast to the President of the USA, who was absent from the celebration; he gave a high appreciation to the contribution of the United States to Allied victory. There had been a time, Stalin said, when Great Britain and Russia could, in cooperation, regulate the affairs of Europe. Together they had defeated Napoleon; together they had fought against the Germans in the First World War. In the Second World War, however, the contribution made by the United States had proved particularly important.

The unstated meaning of these remarks was quite clear: Stalin was hinting to Churchill once again that he had no intention of making a separate deal with him on the future in Europe.

The Results of the Visit

The chief military and political outcome of the talks held in Moscow in October of 1944 between the USSR and Britain was the understanding which was reached on the need to make every effort to destroy the German forces withdrawing from the Balkans. Churchill was assured that the government of the Soviet Union was not planning to send its forces into Greece or onto the shores of the Adriatic Sea and that it would withdraw its forces from Yugoslavia once their tasks had been accomplished.

The two heads of government also discussed many unsettled questions involving the Balkan states and came to agreement on them. The terms of armistice with Bulgaria were considered. During the discussion on creating an Allied control commission for Bulgaria, Churchill and Eden argued that the representatives

of Britain and the USA should have equal status on it with those of the USSR. The Soviet government refused to accept this, citing as examples the Allied control commission for Italy, where leadership had been given to a representative of the Anglo-American command, and for Romania, where the chairmanship had gone to the Soviet representative. It was only natural that a representative of the Soviet Supreme Command should be chairman of the control commission for Bulgaria. In the end, an agreement on the terms of armistice with Bulgaria, acceptable to both sides, was reached.

The situation in Yugoslavia was also discussed. The British declared that it was necessary to pursue a concerted policy towards that country, and Eden recommended that a message be sent to Tito and Subašić suggesting that they meet on Yugoslav territory to discuss the formation of a Yugoslav government. The Soviet government did not object to this.

The British representatives also wanted to discuss the future of Germany: they said that in Teheran this question had been considered only "very superficially". Churchill and Eden brought forward a plan for partitioning Germany into three states: Prussia, a Zone of International Control made up of the Ruhr, Westphalian, and Saar regions, and an Austro-Bavarian state that would incorporate the south-German provinces. In explaining the reasons that underlay this plan, Churchill said that Prussia, in his opinion, was the root of the problem, and that therefore "Prussia should be detached from Germany."¹

The British motivated their proposal for creating a Zone of International Control by maintaining that Germany must be deprived of the industrial might which had made possible the country's resurgence after the First World War. Churchill declared he thought it would be just to restore the economy of the Soviet Union's western regions by confiscating equipment from German enterprises.

It was not difficult to guess that the real aim of the plan to partition Germany was the elimination of Germany as a dangerous competitor for Britain. At the same time, Churchill brought up the idea of uniting Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Hungary in a single group—a confederation or federation.

¹ Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, p. 281.

The Soviet government, while agreeing that Germany's military-industrial potential must be destroyed in order to ensure the security of Europe, refused to commit itself to any sort of partitioning. Further discussion of the German question was postponed until the leaders of the Big Three met again.

As for Churchill's idea of uniting a number of states into a confederation or federation, this could not be seen as anything other than an attempt to set up an anti-Soviet *cordon sanitaire* after the war. During the discussion of this proposal Stalin told Churchill and Eden that it was impossible to think about such unions at the time, especially since different nations, after liberation from the Nazi yoke, would want a full national life without any encumbrances.

The prospects for the conduct of military operations were also considered during the talks. The representatives of Britain and the USSR reviewed the situation on the different fronts and reported that the military plans agreed on in Teheran had been carried out. Firm confidence was expressed in the success of Allied operations on all fronts.

Also discussed was the future contribution of the USSR to the defeat of Japan. Military operations in the Pacific were, on the whole, going well. The Western Allies had won important naval victories that had greatly weakened Japan. The enemy's drawn-out lines of supply were coming under attack. More than half of Japan's merchant fleet had been sunk. The British and American chiefs of staff understood, however, that total victory could be won only by crushing the powerful Japanese armies in China, Manchuria, and the Japanese islands themselves. The Soviet armed forces were to play the decisive role in this final campaign.

Ambassador Harriman was present at the preliminary exchange of opinions on this matter; he insisted that the Americans should take part in the consultations: inasmuch as the USA was bearing the main burden of the war in the Pacific, it should take the most active part in the upcoming talks on this problem. Churchill finally agreed to this, and during the October 14 meeting with Stalin an American general, John R. Deane, was asked to review operations in the Pacific theatre. Having reported on the situation, General Deane, acting on instructions from the US Supreme Command, put three questions before Stalin:

1. How much time would be needed after Germany's defeat before the Soviet Union could enter the war against Japan?

2. How long would it take after that to build up Soviet forces so that they could begin an offensive?

3. How much of the capacity of the Trans-Siberian railroad could be used for the build-up and support of an American strategic air force?

As the British and the Americans were leaving the Kremlin, Churchill said to Deane in a patronising tone: "Young man, I admired your nerve in asking Stalin those last three questions. I have no idea that you will get an answer, but there was certainly no harm in asking."¹

Churchill was mistaken. Stalin gave his answer the next day. He said that it would take three months after Germany's defeat for the Red Army to be ready to undertake an offensive against Japan. Supplies sufficient for a three-month operation would have to be stockpiled in Siberia first; in view of the limited capacity of the Trans-Siberian line, supplies to the air bases made available to the Americans on the USSR's Pacific seaboard would have to be brought by the Americans themselves across the Pacific. Stalin explained that for this the Americans could use the port of Petropavlovsk, in Kamchatka. Repeating that the Red Army could begin military operations three months after Hitler was defeated, Stalin added that two conditions for this would have to be observed: the United States would have to help in building up a large supply stockpile in Siberia, and certain political aspects of the Soviet Union's participation in this war would have to be clarified.

"The Russians would have to know what they were fighting for," Stalin said. "They had certain claims against Japan."²

Back at the time of the Teheran Conference, when the discussion turned to the prospects for the war against Japan, Stalin had asked Roosevelt and Churchill what the Allies were prepared to do for the USSR in the Far East, where the Soviet Union had no free access to the ocean. Roosevelt mentioned the possibility of turning Dairen into a "free port". Churchill's reply was more general in form; he said that the legitimate needs of Russia should be satisfied.

¹ Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, p. 363.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 363-64.

Neither Washington nor London had been surprised when, in October of 1944, Stalin posed this question on the political, as well as military, level and made it clear that the USSR needed to have free access to the ocean. Moreover, British and American politicians could not have failed to notice the Soviet public's heightened interest in the Far East and in certain aspects of that region's history. Stepanov's *Port Arthur* became a best-seller in the Soviet Union just at this time; essentially the book was the reminiscences of a participant in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905 clothed in novel form. All those who read this lengthy book at the time were brought into contact, as it were, with the events of forty years earlier, when the soldiers, sailors, and officers of the Russian army and navy, who performed their military duties heroically, were defeated on account of the negligence of the tsarist authorities. The citizens of the Soviet Union also remembered well the years of intervention in the Far East, and all the harm the Japanese militarists had done to their homeland. When the Red Army joined the war against imperialist Japan, it was said in the Kremlin that the older generation had waited forty years for that moment.

The discussion of these questions by Stalin, Churchill, and Harriman in October of 1944 helped to clarify positions and undoubtedly had an important effect on the decisions made later by the three Allied powers.

In 1944, on the occasion of the anniversary of the October Revolution, a large group of us who worked in the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs was recommended for government awards. I received the Order of the Red Star. The decorations were presented to us by Mikhail Kalinin. My field continued to be the same: Soviet-American relations, plus work as a translator.

Preparations for a New "Big Three" Meeting

The question of a new meeting of the heads of the three great powers began to be heatedly debated in the autumn of 1944. Many important events had taken place since the Teheran Conference. The armed forces of the Allied powers had won new and brilliant victories. The Red Army had swept the aggressors out of Soviet territory and was in the last stages of driving them

out of eastern Europe. The hour was approaching when the anti-Hitler coalition would emerge victorious from an armed struggle of unprecedented scale and cost. And although hard battles with both Nazi Germany and militarist Japan still lay ahead, the problem of post-war settlement was assuming ever greater importance.

At the same time, conflicts within the anti-Hitler coalition were becoming more and more perceptible. They were connected to a considerable degree with attempts by imperialist forces to retain their dominance in the world, and with this in view to weaken as far as possible the Soviet Union and to lessen its influence on world affairs. An important element of this course was the effort to suppress progressive movements in the countries being liberated from fascist enslavement and to foist onto the peoples of these countries reactionary regimes obedient to the Western powers. Lastly, various tendencies within the ruling groups in the West were of no little importance. These were especially evident within the top leadership of the United States, where a split was taking place between those who favoured co-operation with the Soviet Union after the war and those who wanted a "hard line", confrontation, or even war against the USSR.

Under these circumstances a Big Three meeting was of particular importance. There were two factors, though, which complicated preparations for such a meeting: the presidential election to be held in the USA in November of 1944, and the difficulties in agreeing on a meeting place.

Harriman, acting on Roosevelt's instructions, told Stalin on September 23, 1944, that the President was thinking of November as a possible time for a meeting. Since that would be too late in the year for Alaska, which the Americans had proposed for a site, he now proposed that the meeting be held somewhere in the Mediterranean. Stalin replied that he considered such a meeting desirable, but was afraid his doctors would not permit him to make such a long journey.

Stalin complained that his age was beginning to take a toll on him. In the past, he said, he could get over the grippe in two or three days, whereas now it took him a week, or sometimes two.

Harriman mentioned the salubrious effect of the Mediterra-

nean sun, but Stalin said that his doctors thought any change of climate might be dangerous. He offered to send Molotov, in whom he placed complete confidence, to the meeting in his stead. Molotov was present during this conversation, and objected that he could never take the place of Marshal Stalin.

"You are too modest," Stalin told him.

Harriman then said that although the President was always glad to meet with Molotov he hoped that there would be second thoughts in the Kremlin.¹

The talks with Churchill in the Kremlin in October were no substitute, of course, for a Big Three meeting. The American ambassador spoke once again of such a meeting during Churchill's Moscow visit, and moreover hinted that Roosevelt could come to the Black Sea. He said further that Harry Hopkins had told Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet ambassador in Washington, the same thing.

This suggestion suited Stalin perfectly, and on October 19, 1944, he wrote to Roosevelt: "Ambassador Gromyko has informed me of his recent talk with Mr. Hopkins, who told him that you could arrive at the Black Sea late in November and meet with me on the Soviet Black Sea coast. I should very much welcome your doing so. My talk with the Prime Minister convinced me that he shares the idea. In other words, the three of us could meet late in November to examine the questions that have piled up since Tehran. I shall be glad to hear from you about this."²

The President's reply was received in Moscow on October 25. It expressed confidence that what had been accomplished by the Soviet and British leaders during Churchill's recent visit to Moscow would "facilitate and expedite our work in the next meeting when we three should come to a full agreement on our future activities, policies, and mutual interests".³

As to preparations for such a meeting, Roosevelt pointed out that it was necessary to "investigate the practicability of various places where our November meeting can be held, i.e., from the standpoint of living accommodations, security, accessibility, and so forth. I would appreciate receiving your suggestions.

¹ Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, pp. 352-53.

² *Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 165.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

"I have been considering," Roosevelt continued, "the practicability of Cyprus, Athens, or Malta in the event that my entering the Black Sea on a ship should be too difficult or impracticable. I prefer travelling and living on a ship. We know that security and living conditions in Cyprus and Malta are satisfactory. I am looking forward to seeing you again with much pleasure.

"I would be pleased to have your advice and suggestions."¹

Four days later the head of the Soviet government sent the President a reply in which he continued to press for his own idea. He emphasised that conditions on the Soviet Black Sea coast were quite agreeable and expressed the hope that by the time of the meeting it would be possible to ensure safe access to the meeting place for the presidential ship. Thus the site of the Big Three meeting remained an open question.

Soon after, the presidential election was held and Roosevelt emerged the winner. In his congratulatory message on this occasion, Stalin said he was sure that under Roosevelt's experienced leadership the American people would, "jointly with the peoples of the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the other democratic countries, round off the struggle against the common foe and ensure victory in the name of liberating mankind from Nazi tyranny."²

Later Roosevelt had new thoughts on the date for the meeting of the Big Three. In a telegram to Stalin received in Moscow on November 19, he said it would be more convenient to postpone the meeting until after his inauguration on January 20. Thus it was proposed that the meeting be held in an appropriate place on January 28 or 30 of 1945. Roosevelt said that the American naval authorities were strongly opposed to the Black Sea. He explained that they did not want to undertake sending a large vessel through the Aegean Sea and the Dardanelles since that would require a very strong escort, while these forces were urgently needed elsewhere. The President further said that Churchill had suggested Alexandria, Jerusalem, or Athens as a meeting place, and that the date ought not to be later than the end of January or the beginning of February. He expressed hope

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*, p. 168.

that by that time Stalin would be able to travel to some Adriatic port. "Almost any spot in the Mediterranean," the message said, "is accessible to me so that I can be within easy distance of Washington by air in order that I may carry out action on legislation—a subject you are familiar with."¹

After this exchange, the question of a time and place for the Big Three meeting was less clear than ever. It was thoroughly obvious that the broad offensive launched by the Red Army on the Soviet-German front and the fierce battles being fought in a number of its sectors made it impossible for the head of the Soviet government, who was also Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet armed forces, to undertake lengthy and exotic trips like those which Roosevelt described so alluringly.

Incidentally, the President himself realised that his arguments were not very convincing. He was making new suggestions more with an eye to placate the opponents of his own policies in Washington itself. Hopkins writes very frankly about this:

"All of the President's close advisers were opposed to his going to Russia; most did not like or trust the Russians anyway and could not understand why the President of the United States should cart himself all over the world to meet Stalin. This argument carried no weight with me. The all-important thing was to get the meeting. There was not a chance of getting that meeting outside of the Crimea. The President's advisers gave me a lot of acid criticism when they found out that I was the one who had talked to Gromyko about the possibility of going to the Crimea. When they descended on the President to urge him not to go the President wavered again and cooked up a lot of counter proposals, none of which made any sense. I was sure the President would wind up by going to the Crimea, the primary reason being that it was a part of the world he had never visited and his adventurous spirit was forever leading him to go to unusual places, and, on his part, the election being over, he would no longer be disturbed about it for political reasons."²

On November 23, Stalin sent the President a brief and firm reply: "It is too bad that your naval authorities question the advisability of your original idea that the three of us should meet

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. II, pp. 168-169.

² Henry Adams, *Harry Hopkins. A Biography*, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1977, p. 371.

on the Soviet Black Sea coast. There is no objection, as far as I am concerned, to the time of the meeting suggested by you—late January or early February; I expect, however, that we shall be able to select one of the Soviet sea ports. I still have to pay heed to my doctors' warning of the risk involved in long journeys."¹

Finally, Roosevelt announced that he agreed. On December 27, he instructed Harriman to inform Stalin that he was ready to come to a Big Three meeting in Yalta in February. It was decided that thenceforth the meeting would have the code name Argonaut (it was later renamed Magneto).

Active preparations for the Yalta Conference were begun. The participants agreed not to invite members of the press, with the exception of newspaper photographers.

Preparations in the Crimea were in full swing. Most of the work fell to the Soviet side, although the British and the Americans took part in getting ready the residences intended for their respective leaders. Roosevelt was given quarters in Livadia, where the plenary sessions were to take place. The Vorontsov Palace in Alupka was placed at Churchill's disposal. Stalin was to reside in a villa in Koreiz.

It must be remembered that the Crimea had been freed of the Nazi aggressors only a short time before. The traces left by their destruction and brigandage were still to be seen everywhere. An enormous amount of work had to be done to make ready the buildings that had been designated for the conference and delegations. Furniture had to be selected and delivered; major repair work had to be done on buildings and plumbing systems; the surrounding territory had to be cleared. Finally, the necessary measures had to be taken to ensure the safety of the Big Three and other participants in the conference. The Soviet authorities, in a very brief time, accomplished all of this with distinction. Many of the participants in the Yalta Conference later paid tribute in their memoirs to the work done to provide good working conditions for the delegations.

Together with the technical preparations for the new Big Three meeting, the weeks preceding it also saw an intensive exchange of opinions on fundamental political problems.

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 170.

The talks during Churchill's visit to Moscow were part of this exchange. Afterwards there was lively correspondence, and the US and British ambassadors also met with Soviet leaders. The Americans showed a particular interest in reaching agreement with the Soviet government on when the Soviet Union would enter the war against Japan; the Soviet side, in turn, stood firmly by its own interests in the Far East.

The Soviet position was clarified somewhat during Harriman's visit to Stalin on December 14, 1944.

Acting on instructions from the President, Harriman asked what the Soviet Union's demands were in the Far East. Stalin took a map, and said that Lower Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands should be returned to Russia. He stressed that as things stood the approaches to Vladivostok were entirely in Japanese hands, and said the USSR was entitled to protection for its communications to this major port, whereas at the present time all outlets to the Pacific were blocked by the enemy. Lastly, said Stalin, the Soviet Union would want once again to take a lease of Dairen and Port Arthur, and the area surrounding them.

Harriman answered that, as he remembered it, this question had been discussed in Teheran, and Roosevelt had agreed then that the Soviet Union needed to have access to warm-water ports on the Pacific. Harriman added that he thought the President had in mind not the leasing of these areas to the Soviet Union but rather their transformation into international free ports.

Stalin replied by saying that the Soviet side would also like to rent the railroad, built by the Russians, from Dairen to Harbing and from there north-west. He explained that the USSR had no intention of interfering in the internal affairs of China or of violating its sovereignty in Manchuria.

There were, of course, certain elements within the American leadership that wanted to prevent a strengthening of Soviet influence in the Far East. They argued that control over railways in that area could lead to the stationing of Soviet troops there, which might affect the development of the political situation in China and bring success to the "Chinese Red Army" in its struggle against the Guomindang. In view of the leverage these groups had, Harriman recommended that Washington ask Moscow for further details on the USSR's claims in the Far East.

But the ambassador received no reply to this suggestion. The administration in Washington thought it expedient to go no further than the information received at the recent meeting in the Kremlin.

Apparently some part in this was played by Washington's desire to see the Soviet Union enter the war against Japan as soon as possible. Another factor was that at precisely this time the German command launched a powerful offensive in the Ardennes which placed General Eisenhower, the commander of the Anglo-American forces in Western Europe, in a very grave position. American and British generals were bombarding Washington and London with questions about the Soviet plans: in essence, they were calling urgently for help.

On December 24, Roosevelt sent Stalin a message asking that, in view of the pressing business at hand, a high-ranking officer from General Eisenhower's headquarters be allowed to visit Moscow to discuss Eisenhower's situation on the Western Front and its relation to the Eastern Front. The Soviet government immediately agreed, and British Air Chief Marshal Arthur Tedder was sent to Moscow. On January 6, before Tedder had arrived in the Soviet capital, Churchill dispatched a special message to Stalin. "The battle in the West is very heavy," he wrote. "It is General Eisenhower's great desire and need to know in outline what you plan to do, as this obviously affects all his and our major decisions. Our Envoy, Air Chief Marshal Tedder, was last night reported weather-bound in Cairo. . . In case he has not reached you yet, I shall be grateful if you can tell me whether we can count on a major Russian offensive on the Vistula front, or elsewhere, during January. . . I regard the matter as urgent."¹

The next day Stalin answered: "We are mounting an offensive, but at the moment the weather is unfavourable. Still, in view of our Allies' position on the Western Front, GHQ of the Supreme Command have decided to complete preparations at a rapid rate and, regardless of weather, to launch large-scale offensive operations along the entire Central Front not later than the second half of January. Rest assured we shall do all in our power to support the valiant forces of our Allies."²

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. I, p. 294.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 294-95.

The Soviet command had been making thorough preparations for this operation, the goal of which was to complete the liberation of Poland. Now it was decided to reduce the time of preparation for this operation to a minimum. On January 12 through 15, the Red Army moved westward along a front 700 kilometres in length. By February 1, Soviet forces had pushed forward 500 kilometres in the direction of the main thrust, liberated Warsaw, and reached the Oder River.

When Tedder and his group finally arrived in Moscow on January 15, the offensive on the Soviet-German front was in full swing. At his first meeting with Stalin in the Kremlin he was informed that the Soviet command had committed a large force which was capable of maintaining offensive for two months, and possibly longer. Afterwards there was an exchange of information on various matters: the state of the German reserves, the Luftwaffe's shortage of trained pilots, and the synchronisation of spring operations on the two fronts. Tedder expressed gratitude for the aid given to the Allied forces in their difficulty.

"We have no written agreement," Stalin answered, "but we are comrades-in-arms. It is reasonable and proper, and in the interests of both sides, for us to help one another in difficult moments. It would have been stupid for me to stand aside and let the Nazis destroy you. In the same way, it is in your interests to do everything possible to prevent the Nazis from destroying us."

It may be supposed that Marshal Tedder had little pleasure in hearing these words, which contained a veiled reproach to the Allies for their long delay in opening a second front and for standing on the sidelines when the Soviet Union was faced with a critical situation.

Immediately after this meeting, Stalin sent Roosevelt a telegram that read as follows: "Today, January 15, I had a talk with Marshal Tedder and the generals accompanying him. In my view the information we exchanged was complete enough. Both parties gave exhaustive answers to the questions. I must say that I was most impressed by Marshal Tedder.

"After four days of offensive operations on the Soviet-German front I am now in a position to inform you that our offensive is making satisfactory progress despite unfavourable weather. The entire Central Front—from the Carpathians to the Baltic Sea—is moving westwards. The Germans, though resisting desperately,

are retreating. I feel sure that they will have to disperse their reserves between the two fronts and, as a result, relinquish the offensive on the Western Front. I am glad that this circumstance will ease the position of the Allied troops in the West.”¹

In the course of the consultations that preceded the meeting in Yalta, questions involving post-war settlement were also touched upon. Since no agreement had been reached at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference on voting procedure in the Security Council of the new international organisation, efforts were now made to bring positions closer together and to work out a formula acceptable to all. A good deal of hope was placed on the personal contact between top leaders at the upcoming conference.

Meanwhile, an exchange of opinions was going on in Washington on future bilateral relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. This problem was of special concern to Roosevelt, who had repeatedly spoken in favour of mutually beneficial cooperation and of creating a solid economic basis for relations between the USSR and the USA. On January 10, 1945, Secretary of Treasury Henry Morgenthau sent to the White House the draft of a plan for extending credits to the USSR on very favourable terms: 10,000 million dollars at two per cent annual interest, with a repayment period of thirty-five years. A week later Morgenthau visited Edward Stettinius, the new Secretary of State, to discuss the plan with him. In presenting his ideas, Morgenthau said his aim was to show the Soviet government that the USA was resolved to work together with the USSR in the post-war period.

A short time later Assistant Secretary of State William Clayton informed Harriman that the President was extremely interested in the idea of extending a sizable credit to the Soviet Union, but nothing should be done until Roosevelt had discussed the whole question personally with Stalin at Yalta.

As for Churchill, his particular concern in preparing for Argonaut was to conduct preliminary talks with the Americans so as to form a united front against the Soviet Union at the upcoming conference. Knowing that this idea left Roosevelt cold, he proposed that a conference of the Combined Chiefs of Staff of Britain and the USA be held in Malta; the Prime Minister and

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 184.

the President could also take part in this on the eve of their departure by air for the Crimea. Churchill wrote to Roosevelt that the two of them ought to discuss certain "matters which do not affect the Russians".¹

The President declined this suggestion. He said that even with the best weather he could not arrive at Malta with enough time at his disposal. He would have to continue at once on his journey if he was to arrive in Yalta at the time agreed. But still Churchill continued to press for his own idea. On January 8, he sent another telegram to the President, arguing that it was imperative to hold a preliminary Anglo-American conference on the foreign ministers' level at least. To placate the Americans, he added that Molotov too might be invited. Thereupon the President conceded to send three American generals—King, Arnold, and Marshall—to meet with their British colleagues several days before the conference in order to discuss matters of common interest. He rejected the idea of a meeting of foreign ministers, however.

The Yalta Conference

For and Against

The Yalta Conference, which was held from February 4 through 11, 1945, had an important place in the diplomatic history of the Second World War. It was the second meeting of the leaders of the three great powers in the anti-Hitler coalition—the USSR, the USA, and Great Britain. Its overall thrust, like that of the Teheran Conference, was in the direction of reaching agreed decisions on ultimate victory and post-war settlement.

Afterwards, during the cold-war years, opponents of cooperation with the Soviet Union on both sides of the Atlantic exerted themselves not a little to discredit the decisions adopted at Yalta. They tried to depict the Western powers as having given in at the conference, as having allowed the Soviet side to seize all the benefits—to the detriment of the West. It was then that

¹ *Roosevelt and Churchill, Their Secret Wartime Correspondence*, Doc. 497, *Op. cit.*, p. 644.

the legend of the "sick man at Yalta" was created, according to which President Roosevelt, because of poor health, was altogether unaware of what he was doing and unable to evaluate the consequences that the conference's decisions would have.

This legend still has its believers, although it has been refuted by the best authorities. It is true that when the Big Three met in the Crimea Roosevelt had less than two months left to live. But the rapid deterioration of his health took place only in the last few weeks. As for the Yalta conference, the President's personal physician, Doctor Howard Bruenn, who was with him in Livadia, said that Roosevelt's health was perfectly satisfactory, "his lungs clear and his heart and blood pressure unchanged".¹ The President's wife, Eleanor, testified to the same: "Franklin had high hopes that at this conference he could make real progress in strengthening the personal relationship between himself and Marshal Stalin. . . He knew that negotiation invariably involved some give and take, but he was a good bargainer and a good poker player, and he loved the game of negotiation. I am sure that even at the Yalta conference, the necessity of matching his wits against other people's stimulated him and kept him alert and interested, no matter how weary he may at times have been."²

Another fiction disseminated by the apologists of the cold war ought to be mentioned here. This is the claim that the Soviet Union violated the Yalta decisions and thus brought about the alienation of the wartime Allies. The inconsistency here is patent: if the decisions made at the Yalta Conference favoured the Soviet Union, why did the USSR later find it necessary to violate them? It would be senseless to look for logic here, though. Such fabrications merely serve the ends of a definite social group; they are intended solely to discredit, by any means, the agreements which the wartime Allies arrived at together in the Crimea. The bottom line is that these agreements became a thorn in the side of those in Washington and London who wanted to turn sharply away from cooperation with the Soviet Union and towards confrontation.

Even as the Yalta meetings were about to begin, there were

¹ J. Burns, *Op. cit.*, p. 573.

² Eleanor Roosevelt, *This I Remember*, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1949, pp. 339-40.

forces actively at work in the USA and Britain to prevent the three chief participants in the anti-Hitler coalition from reaching agreement. The crushing blows dealt the Nazis by the Red Army, the rapid westward advance of the Soviet forces, the liberation of the territory of one East European state after another by the Red Army—all of this was cause for worry among those who regarded any strengthening of the role played by the Soviet Union as a threat to their own social privileges and imperialist ambitions. As they saw it, the time had come to adopt a “tough” line towards Moscow.

It was precisely in this spirit that George Kennan, who was then a counsellor at the US embassy in Moscow, conceived the note which he sent to Yalta. Kennan is now inclined to look critically at some of his youthful mistakes, but in the 1940s he was widely known as an ideologist of the cold war. Here is what Kennan had to say to the American participants in the Yalta Conference:

“I am aware of the realities of this war, and of the fact that we were too weak to win it without Russian cooperation. I recognize that Russia’s war effort has been masterful and effective and must, to a certain extent, find its reward. . . . But with all of this, I fail to see why we must associate ourselves with this political program, so hostile to the interests of the Atlantic community as a whole, so dangerous to everything which we need to see preserved in Europe.”

Kennan went on to offer his own alternative program:

1. Plans for creating a United Nations Organisation must be buried “as quickly and quietly as possible”, since its only practical result would be to commit the United States to the defense of “a swollen and unhealthy Russian sphere of power”.
2. The American people must be corrected of the “dangerously erroneous impression that the security of the world depends on our assuming some formal blanket engagement to use our armed force in some given set of circumstances, as set forth in some legal documents”. The USA must retain for itself the right to determine where its armed forces should be used.
3. The United States should “write off” Eastern and South-Eastern Europe unless it was willing to “go the whole hog” and oppose with all its physical and diplomatic resources Russian domination of the area.

4. The United States should "accept as an accomplished fact the complete partition of Germany" and begin consultations with the British and French on creating a West-European federation to include the western parts of Germany.¹

In essence, this was a programme for splitting the world into two opposing camps. President Roosevelt and his closest advisers did not heed Kennan's call; they continued along their course towards developing cooperation in arms and building together the post-war world.

On February 4, the Big Three talks opened in the Livadia Palace. Churchill made haste to express his deep admiration of the might demonstrated by the Red Army in its offensive. To this Stalin answered that the Red Army's winter offensive which Churchill had spoken of so gratefully was an act of duty done by a comrade-in-arms. The decisions adopted in Teheran had not obliged the Soviet government to undertake a winter offensive, but the Soviet command had launched an offensive, and done so even before the planned date. The Soviet government had considered this its duty, the duty of an ally, even though it was under no formal obligations in this respect. Stalin suggested that the leaders of the Allied powers keep in mind that Soviet leaders not only fulfilled their obligations but were also prepared to do their moral duty to the best of their ability.

This was a reminder to the Western politicians of the events of the recent past. In the first years of the war, when the Red Army was fighting terrible battles against the superior forces of the Wehrmacht, London and Washington had not only ignored their moral duty to their Ally but reneged on their own repeated promises to open a second front. The Western leaders had nothing to say in answer; Churchill could only express his wish that the Soviet armies' offensive might continue with the same success. By the time of the Yalta Conference, the situation at the front left Western politicians no alternative but to acknowledge that without the active participation of the Soviet Union, the United States and Britain would not have been able to overcome Nazi Germany.

Another, no less important, military problem also had its effect on the atmosphere at the Yalta meetings: the desire of the West-

¹ Charles Bohlen, *Op. cit.*, pp. 175-76.

ern Allies, and especially the United States, to get a definite commitment from Moscow on the USSR's entry into the war against Japan. At the time, the USA regarded reaching agreement on this question with the Soviet Union as its principal aim.

Preliminary Sessions

Before the official opening of the conference, preliminary meetings took place between the leaders of the three powers. At three o'clock in the afternoon of February 4, Stalin arrived at the Vorontsov Palace for a conversation with Churchill. The Prime Minister says in his memoirs that they had an interesting discussion concerning the further course of the war against Germany. Stalin said that Germany did not have enough grain and coal, and that its system of transportation had been seriously damaged. Germany's entire military organism was gravely ill. The best generals had vanished from the scene. And although Hitler still had significant panzer forces, his Reich was no longer a world power, able to maintain troops wherever it saw a need. After listening to these remarks, Churchill turned to the military situation in Western Europe. Using a map, he went over the movements on the different fronts, with particular attention to the situation in Italy.

At four o'clock Stalin paid a visit to Roosevelt at the Livadia Palace. The President remarked on the destruction he had seen along the way to Yalta, and said that now he was even more "bloodthirsty" towards the Nazis than he had been in Teheran in 1943. Stalin replied that the destruction in the Crimea could not compare in any way with what the Nazis had done in the Ukraine, where they had deliberately and methodically set about wreaking havoc. The conversation then turned to Roosevelt's voyage across the Atlantic aboard the cruiser *Quincy*; the President said he had made a bet on whether the Russians would get to Berlin before the Americans liberated Manila. Stalin expressed the opinion that the Americans would take the Philippine capital before the Red Army entered Berlin, since the battles along the Oder were going very hard. The Soviet forces had been able to set up several bridgeheads, he said, but the enemy was putting up a fierce resistance.

Touching on the situation on the Western front, Roosevelt

said that General Eisenhower did not expect to cross the Rhine before March, since earlier than that the current was too swift and ice floes would hinder pontoon operations. And so, Roosevelt concluded, the decisive offensive against Germany would apparently have to be put off until spring.

The time had come to move to the ballroom of the palace, where the first plenary session of the conference was scheduled to open at five. A Marine appeared from the next room to push the President's wheel-chair. Stalin walked alongside. Before moving into the ballroom, Stalin asked whether the President did not think the French should be given a zone of occupation in Germany.

"That's not a bad idea," Roosevelt said. After a pause, he added that if this were done it would be "only out of kindness". He disliked de Gaulle, and this showed in his attitude towards French affairs. Stalin agreed that kindness was probably the only possible reason for giving the French a zone of occupation.

The first plenary session of the Yalta Conference was opened by President Roosevelt, as Stalin had suggested.

"Neither in law nor in history," he began, "is it envisaged that I should open conferences. It was only by chance that I opened the Teheran Conference. But I consider it a great honour to open the present conference. I would like to start by saying how grateful I am for the hospitality that has been shown me."

The President paused briefly and looked around the large, round table at which the participants were seated. At its centre were the three little flags of the powers in the anti-Hitler coalition.

The leaders of the three powers, he continued, already understood each other well, and the mutual understanding among them was growing. They all wanted a rapid end to the war and a lasting peace. This was why the participants had been able to begin their unofficial talks. Roosevelt said he thought it was necessary to talk frankly. Experience had shown that frankness in negotiating made it possible to reach good decisions more quickly. The participants would have before them the maps of Europe, Asia, and Africa. But the session that day, he said, would be devoted to the situation on the Eastern front, where the Red Army was advancing with such success. The President then asked for a report on the situation on the Soviet-German front.

At Stalin's suggestion, this report was made by Army General Antonov, Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army. He described in detail the course of the offensive begun by the Soviet forces on January 12 to 15 along a 700-kilometre front—between the Niemen and the Carpathians, and indicated the chief thrust of the various groupings.

Afterwards General Marshall of the USA spoke about operations on the Western front, and described the difficulties connected with the situation in the Ardennes, where the Germans had concentrated "rather big" forces. Marshall also said that the Germans would probably resume their submarine offensive soon, since they had developed an improved type of vessel. The trouble was that devices the Allies had at the time were unable to detect these submarines. For this reason the operations of British and American heavy bombers had lately been directed against the yards where these submarines were being built. Nonetheless, Marshall declared, these operations had not detracted from Allied air strikes against German industry.

When General Marshall had finished his report, Churchill said that before the participants moved on to non-military matters he would like to bring up a question concerning the forcing of rivers. The officer who was in charge of studying this problem for the Western Allies was present in Yalta, Churchill said, and the Allies would be grateful if he could receive information from the Soviet military on the forcing of rivers. It was well known, the Prime Minister added, that the Russians had great experience in this, and especially in forcing ice-bound rivers.

Stalin promised to help in this matter, and asked a number of questions about the Allies' upcoming military operations. He enquired about the length of the front along which the breakthrough was to be made, about enemy fortifications in that sector, and about the adequacy of Allied reserves. He attached special importance to having enough tank divisions. General Marshall replied in detail to these questions, and said the Allies would have ten or twelve tank divisions to thirty-five infantry divisions.

Afterwards there was an exchange of opinions on the coordination of military actions. Stalin remarked that Allied operations were out of phase. The Allies had begun their offensive in the autumn, when the Soviet forces had halted theirs. Then the mistake had been repeated in reverse. Emphasising the need to

avoid such errors in the future, Stalin suggested that plans for further operations be discussed. Churchill said he would prefer to let the military men deal with such questions while the leaders discussed political problems. This suggestion was agreed to.

Churchill said he thought the next plenary session should be devoted to political questions, namely the future of Germany.

"If Germany has a future," he added.

To which Stalin replied:

"Germany will have a future!"

The British Inheritance

During the plenary session on February 9, an incident took place that centred on Churchill. Everything went along as usual, in calm and dignity, until Edward Stettinius, the American Secretary of State, who was speaking about preparations for the upcoming United Nations conference, touched on the problem of trusteeships. There was actually no reason for the British to take offense: Stettinius only mentioned that before the conference began the future permanent members of the Security Council should consult through diplomatic channels regarding trusteeships over colonial and dependent peoples.

Churchill, however, saw this as an encroachment on the interests of the British Empire. The mere mention of the matter of trusteeship flustered him in the extreme.

The Prime Minister exclaimed that he vigorously objected to discussing this question. He said Great Britain had been waging a hard struggle for long years in order to preserve the integrity of the British Commonwealth and the British Empire. He was confident, he said, that the struggle would end in complete success. As long as Britain's flag flew over the territories of the British Crown, he continued, not one bit of British soil would be put up for auction before forty states. The British Empire would never be placed on trial before an international court on the question of trusteeship over under-age nations.

This tirade burst like a storm into the calm atmosphere of the talks. Stettinius hastened to assure Churchill that he had not at all meant his remarks to apply to the British Empire. The Ameri-

can delegation, he explained, only wanted the world organisation to establish trusteeship over territories taken away from the enemy, where this was necessary.

Churchill then declared in a conciliatory tone that if it were a question of enemy territories he had no objections. Perhaps it would be appropriate to place such territories under trusteeship.

Stettinius repeated that the conference of the three ministers of foreign affairs had recognised the desirability of discussing the question of trusteeship at the United Nations conference.

But Churchill well understood what the Americans were aiming at. This was why he insisted on a special qualification in the text of the decision saying that the discussion of trusteeship was not in any way related to the territory of the British Empire.

Churchill had long suspected the Americans of deviously plotting to lay their hands on some of Britain's possessions. And not without cause. It was foreseen in Washington that Britain would emerge from the war considerably weakened and prove incapable of dealing with the movement for national liberation that was developing. Moreover, it was the prevailing opinion in the USA that the old colonial methods of dominance were outmoded and might be unsuitable for the mid-twentieth century. Hence Washington's keen interest in the so-called system of international trusteeship, which would enable American imperialism to use the United Nations as a screen for establishing a neo-colonialist system with the USA as the beneficiary. Also involved of course, was the idea of world dominance for America, the realisation of which was hampered by the "old" colonialism, including that of Great Britain.

London and Washington had repeatedly been at loggerheads over this matter, as can be seen from the secret correspondence between Churchill and Roosevelt. Early in 1944, for instance, the President informed the Prime Minister that he had instructed the State Department to consult with experts on the question of oil. On February 22 of that year, an American inter-agency committee drew up the first draft of a paper on US foreign policy with respect to oil. The document said that the first task facing the United States was extending the stipulations of the Atlantic Charter about "free access" to the question of oil.

Roosevelt sent assurances to Churchill: "...Please do accept my assurances that we are not making sheep's eyes at your oil

fields in Iraq or Iran." Nevertheless, he continued, "I cannot hold off conversations much longer."¹

The Prime Minister was greatly unnerved by the Americans' plans. On March 4 he wrote to the President: "Thank you very much for your assurances about no sheep's eyes at our oil fields at Iran and Iraq. Let me reciprocate by giving you the fullest assurance that we have no thought of trying to horn in upon your interests or property in Saudi Arabia. My position on this, as in all matters, is that Great Britain seeks no advantage, territorial or otherwise, as the result of the war. On the other hand she will not be deprived of anything which rightly belongs to her after having given her best services to the good cause—at least not so long as your humble servant is entrusted with the conduct of her affairs."²

The British lion, as we see, had shown its claws. But they were already much blunted, as Washington well knew. Churchill realised this as well, although he refused to admit as much. And so, fearing for the future of the empire, he sought repeatedly to extract from Roosevelt a promise to shore up Britain's positions. Washington, however, was undertaking no such obligations. On November 28, 1944, shortly after Roosevelt had been elected for a fourth term in office, Churchill sent to the White House a long secret message in which he gave voice to his worries and concerns. He was especially troubled by the Americans' suggestion that British bases all over the world be put at their disposal.

"I have never advocated competitive 'bigness' in any sphere between our two countries in their present state of development," Churchill wrote. "You will have the greatest navy in the world. You will have, I hope, the greatest air force. You will have the greatest trade. You have all the gold. But these things do not oppress my mind with fear because I am sure the American people under your reacclaimed leadership will not give themselves over to vainglorious ambitions, and that justice and fair play will be the lights that guide them."³

With this rather flattering missive Churchill was hoping to "soften up" his friend across the water and obtain from him ap-

¹ *Roosevelt and Churchill. Their Secret Wartime Correspondence*, *Op. cit.*, p. 459.

² *Ibid.*, Doc. 322, p. 459.

³ *Ibid.*, Doc. 468, p. 611.

propriate assurances. But Roosevelt remained firm. His reply could, perhaps, serve as an epitome of diplomatic documents in the heyday of the "American dream" of world dominance.

"I have given careful thought to your 836 and to the problems which you cite," the President said in his letter of November 30, 1944. "You know that I have no desire for any arrangement by which our people would profit from the sacrifices which yours have made in this war. Your confidence in the justice and fair play of the American people is, I am sure, justified. I have equal confidence that your people have the same qualities in the same measure. I know that they want equal opportunity in the air and unquestionably they should have it. I cannot believe that they would want aviation, in which you as well as we have a great future, stifled and suffocated because they were for a moment in a less favorable competitive position.

"You say that the British Empire is being asked to put bases all over the world at the disposal of other nations. Of course it is. Would you like to see a world in which all ports were closed to all ships but their own or open to one foreign ship, perhaps two, if they carried only passengers and cargo bound all the way from Liverpool to Shanghai? Where would England be if shipping were subjected to such limitations? . . . I am unable to believe that you do not want an agreement at this time.

"I cannot agree that the answer is to hold every one back. It must be rather to go forward together. I know the handicaps under which your aviation industry has labored during the war. We have found ways to help you before and I am confident that we can find ways to help you in overcoming this. We are prepared to make transport aircraft freely available to you on the same terms as our own people can get them. Our only stipulation is that aviation must be permitted to develop, subject only to reasonable safeguards, as far and as fast as human ingenuity and enterprise can take it.

"We have no desire to monopolize air traffic anywhere. I do not see how increased frequencies on long routes would dominate traffic on short ones, when all lines would have the same right to increase their frequencies on the same basis. Nor do I see how in the long term such an arrangement would favor us over others, despite our head start.

"You asked that I give further consideration to the funda-

mentals of your position and that I state the issues as I see them. I have done both and I am more convinced than ever that the answer is not to hold back but to go forward together.”¹

The question of air transport was, of course, only one of the elements in American imperialism’s struggle to take over the British inheritance. But at that moment it was probably the question that expressed in the highest relief the essence of the conflict between Britain and the USA. It is odd to find references, in this connection, to fair play, equal opportunities, and the like. It is completely obvious, after all, that in the conditions existing then the overwhelming might of America’s monopolies placed them above all competition; they expected to take *all* the benefits for themselves. This aspiration can be plainly perceived through Roosevelt’s rather transparent arguments.

The British Tories were hoping at this time, however, that their country would long continue to rule the waves and be the leading colonial power. It was not four years after the end of the war, though, that the Commonwealth of Nations so dear to Churchill’s heart began to come apart at the seams. More and more pieces split away from the empire. America’s ruling groups were also unable to realise in full their neo-colonialist plans. Hundreds of millions of former subjects of the British empire, and of other colonial empires, including France, Holland, and Belgium, embarked on the road of independent development.

Understanding About Poland’s Borders

The discussion of the Polish question began at the February 6 plenary session of the Yalta Conference. Roosevelt, speaking first, recommended that Poland’s eastern border be drawn along the Curzon line. He added, however, that it would be well to consider making concessions to the Poles with regard to the southern part of that line. He had in mind the Lvov area, although he did not say as much. Roosevelt further suggested that a Presidential Council, made up of “a small number of outstanding Poles”, be set up to undertake the task of forming a provisional government of Poland. The President added that it was hoped

¹ *Roosevelt and Churchill. Their Secret Wartime Correspondence*, Doc. 470, pp. 612-13.

in the United States that Poland would have most friendly relations with the Soviet Union.

Here Stalin put in that Poland would have friendly relations not only with the Soviet Union but with all the Allies.

Roosevelt then invited Churchill to comment on his suggestions. The Prime Minister declared that he was authorised to express the British Government's favourable attitude towards them. He added that he had always publicly declared, in Parliament and elsewhere, the British Government's intention to recognise the border as interpreted by the Soviet Union—that is, with Lvov remaining in Soviet territory. He had always thought, Churchill said, that after the tragedy the Soviet Union had lived through in defending itself from German aggression and after the efforts the USSR had made to liberate Poland, Moscow's claim to Lvov and to the Curson line was based not on might but on right. As for the problem of forming a Polish government, Churchill declared, he favoured Roosevelt's proposal and would like to see a provisional government created that would be recognised by the USSR, the USA, and Britain and that would exist until the Polish people could elect a government for itself freely. Roosevelt had no objection to this, and so agreement was reached concerning the eastern border of Poland.

The American and British leaders' position on the question of Poland's borders—which incidentally they had also set forth earlier, at the Teheran Conference—merits special attention, since afterwards the Western powers tried to move away from it and to depict the Soviet Union as having violated the decisions jointly adopted on this question. In actuality, the USSR stood firmly by its principles and insisted that what the Big Three had agreed upon be carried out.

At that same session, on February 6, Stalin clearly stated Moscow's point of view:

"For the Russians," he said, "the question of Poland is not only a question of honour but also a question of security. A question of honour because in the past the Russians have committed many wrongs against Poland. The Soviet government wants to make amends for those wrongs. A question of security because the major strategic problems of the Soviet state are connected with Poland.

"The point is not only that Poland is a neighbour country.

That is important, of course, but the heart of the matter lies much deeper. Throughout history, Poland has been a corridor through which the enemy passed to attack Russia. It is sufficient to recall the past thirty years: in that time the Germans have twice went across Poland to attack our country. Why have our enemies until now passed so easily through Poland? Primarily because Poland has been weak. The Polish corridor can be reliably locked only from the inside, by Poland's own forces. For this Poland must be strong. This is why the Soviet Union has an interest in creating a strong, free, and independent Poland. The question of Poland is a question of life and death for the Soviet state."

As for the Curzon line, Stalin reminded those present, it had not been invented by the Russians. Its authors were Curzon, Clemenceau, and the Americans, who had participated in the Paris Conference of 1919. The Curzon line had been adopted on the basis of ethnic data contrary to the will of the Russians. Lenin had not agreed to it; he had been unwilling to give to Poland the city of Białystok and the surrounding region, as the Curzon line required.

"Do you want us to be less Russian than Curzon and Clemenceau?" Stalin continued. "You will disgrace us that way. What will the Ukrainians say if we accept your proposal? They might say that Stalin and Molotov turned out to be less reliable protectors for the Russians and the Ukrainians than Curzon and Clemenceau did. . . No, it would be better for the war against the Germans to go on a little longer, but we must be able to compensate Poland in the west, at Germany's expense."

Turning to the question of Poland's western border, Stalin said that it must run along the Western Neisse. He asked Roosevelt and Churchill to support him in this.

Stalin then touched on the question of the composition of the Polish government. He recalled that the previous autumn, when Churchill had come to Moscow, he had brought along with him from London Mikolajczyk, Grabski, and Romer. Representatives of the Lublin government had been invited to Moscow at that time too, and there had been talks among the Polish leaders. As Churchill knew, certain points of agreement had taken shape. Mikolajczyk had then left for London, intending to return to Moscow soon to complete steps towards organising a Polish gov-

ernment. Mikolajczyk had been expelled from the Polish government in London for insisting on an agreement with the Lublin government.

"The present Polish government in London," Stalin continued, "headed by Arcyszewski and led by Razkewicz, is opposed to an agreement with the Lublin government. What is more, it is hostile towards such an agreement. The London Poles call the Lublin government a bunch of criminals and bandits. Naturally, the former Lublin government—now the Warsaw government—has paid this back in kind, calling the London Poles traitors and turncoats. How can they be united under these circumstances?"

The leaders of the Warsaw government, Stalin declared, would not hear of any unification with the Polish government in London and they were strongly opposed to Mikolajczyk as prime minister. Stalin said he was ready to undertake anything in order to bring the Poles together, but only if the attempt had some chance of success.

Referring to Churchill's suggestion that a Polish government be created at the present conference, Stalin said he thought this must have been a slip of the tongue: how could a Polish government be created without the participation of the Poles?

Stalin remarked that many considered him a dictator, not a democrat, but that he had "enough democratic feeling not to try to create a Polish government without the Poles. That government should be created only with the Poles' participation and consent."

Stalin expressed the opinion that a decision on the question of the Polish government should be put off until it had been discussed with the Poles. He emphasised that among the Poles were people of differing views.

Churchill, sensing that he had got into an awkward position, hastened to assure everyone that all he wanted was to be able to get the question of Poland's eastern border through Parliament on his return to Britain. He believed that would be possible if the Poles could decide among themselves the question of the government. He added that he himself, however, was of no high opinion about the Poles.

Everyone felt that Churchill had committed yet another lapse from tact. Stalin reacted to his words at once, saying that there were some very good people among the Poles. The Poles were

brave in battle, he said, and the Polish people had produced outstanding scientists and artists. In reply Churchill said only that he was trying to give all sides equal opportunities.

Stalin declared that all non-fascist and anti-fascist forces would have equal opportunities.

Considerable time throughout the conference was devoted to the Polish question. In the end the American idea of a presidential council was rejected. The participants agreed that Poland would receive compensation at the expense of East Prussia to the south of Königsberg and in Upper Silesia right up to the Oder.

The American delegation presented a proposal that became the basis for a document adopted after lengthy discussions. The declaration On Poland, published after the conference, said that "the Provisional Government presently functioning in Poland should be . . . reorganised on a broader democratic basis so as to include democratic leaders from Poland itself and also Poles from abroad". As for Poland's borders, the Curzon line was adopted on the east, and a new border drawn along the Oder and Western Neisse in the west. The declaration dealt with this only in a general way, saying that "the eastern frontier of Poland should follow the Curzon line with digressions from it in some regions of 5 to 8 kilometres in favour of Poland". It was further stated that the three heads of government thought "Poland must receive substantial accessions of territory in the north and west", and that the opinion of the new Polish Government of National Unity would be sought in due course on the extent of these accessions.*

Far-Eastern Affairs

The preliminary exchange of opinions on the USSR's entry into the war against Japan and related questions considerably facilitated the examination of this problem in Yalta. Another factor was that just before the meeting in the Crimea the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the USA had presented to Roosevelt a rather pessimistic report on the prospects for American military operations against Japan. In their opinion, it would be at least a year

* Translation from the Russian made according to the official Soviet text.

and a half after Germany's capitulation before victory could be won. They did not at all expect that Japan would surrender early on, and planned an invasion of the Japanese islands to begin no earlier than the winter of 1945-46. And if there should be a delay in the European war, which would hold up the transfer of forces to the Pacific theatre, it was suggested that the invasion be postponed altogether until sometime later in 1946. The Joint Chiefs of Staff hoped that help from the USSR would reduce American losses in this operation, which General MacArthur pictured as an extremely fierce campaign to invade and occupy the industrial heart of Japan across the Tokyo lowlands.

The views of the American high command undoubtedly had considerable weight in determining Roosevelt's position at the Yalta Conference. The question of the war against Japan was discussed at a meeting between Stalin and Roosevelt on February 8. Molotov and Harriman were present, but besides the interpreters no one else was included. In his account of this meeting, Harriman says that Stalin, in his introductory remarks, referred to the conversation he had with the American ambassador in Moscow and said the Soviet side would like to discuss the political conditions under which the USSR was prepared to enter the war. He continued by outlining the views presented to Harriman in December of the previous year.

Roosevelt replied that he saw no difficulty in returning south Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands to the Soviet Union. As for Dairen, he had already said, in Teheran, that the USSR should certainly have free access to a warm-water port in the terminal sector of the Manchurian Railroad. At the present, however, he could not speak for the Chinese government. He might possibly put before the Chinese the question of leasing Dairen, which would become a free port under international control. Roosevelt said he would prefer this method in relation not only to Dairen but also to Hong Kong. As for the Manchurian Railroad, he would prefer to see it operated jointly by the Russians and the Chinese, rather than leased.

This evasive answer did not at all satisfy the Soviet side, and Stalin continued to press his demands. If his conditions were not met, he declared, it would be difficult for the Soviet people to understand why the USSR was entering the war against Japan. They well understood the reason for the war against Germany,

which had threatened the very existence of their country, but they would not see why the USSR needed to attack Japan. If, however, his political conditions were met, it would be much easier to explain things both to the people and to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, since then it would be a question of the country's national interests.

Roosevelt, for lack of other arguments, began to say that he had not had time to discuss this matter with Chiang Kai-shek, and that, on the whole, it was difficult to speak frankly with the Chinese, since anything you talked to them about would be known everywhere in the world, including Tokyo, in twenty-four hours.

Stalin remarked that there was no need for hurry in informing the Chinese. All he wanted was for his suggestions to be set forth in writing and to receive Roosevelt's and Churchill's approval before the conference was over. Roosevelt did not object to this.

On February 10, Molotov invited Harriman to the Villa Korzeiz, the residence of the Soviet delegation, and gave him the English text of the Soviet proposals concerning the political conditions for the USSR's entering the war against Japan. After looking the document over, Harriman said he thought the President would want the following amendments: Port Arthur and Dairen should be free ports, and the Manchurian Railroad should be operated by a joint Russian-Chinese commission. Furthermore, the entire agreement would have to be approved by the Chinese.

On his return to Livadia, Harriman received Roosevelt's approval of the amendments he had formulated. The whole question was settled finally after the plenary session of the conference in the evening of that same day. Stalin, left alone with Roosevelt, said he agreed to the operation of the Manchurian Railroad by a joint commission. Likewise he did not object to having the agreement reached confirmed by the Chinese. He added, however, that he also wanted the Chinese to confirm the *status quo* in the Mongolian People's Republic. Stalin also agreed that Dairen be a free port, but insisted that Port Arthur be leased for use, since there would be a Soviet naval base there. Roosevelt accepted this change and declared he would take on the responsibility for consulting Chiang Kai-shek when Stalin let him know that the time was ripe.

On the basis of the agreement reached, a document was drawn up and signed by Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill on February 11. The leaders of the three great Powers, it said, had agreed that "in two or three months after Germany has surrendered and the war in Europe has terminated, the Soviet Union shall enter into the war against Japan on the side of the Allies on condition that:

"1. The *status quo* in Outer-Mongolia (the Mongolian People's Republic) shall be preserved;

"2. The former rights of Russia violated by the treacherous attack of Japan in 1904 shall be restored, viz.:

"a) the southern part of Sakhalin as well as all the islands adjacent to it shall be returned to the Soviet Union,

"b) the commercial port of Dairen shall be internationalised, the pre-eminent interests of the Soviet Union in this port being safeguarded and the lease of Port Arthur as a naval base of the USSR restored,

"c) the Chinese-Eastern Railroad and the South-Manchurian Railroad which provides an outlet to Dairen shall be jointly operated by the establishment of a joint Soviet-Chinese Company, it being understood that the pre-eminent interests of the Soviet Union shall be safeguarded and that China shall retain full sovereignty in Manchuria;

"3. The Kuril Islands shall be handed over to the Soviet Union."

The document further stated that the agreement on Outer Mongolia and the ports and railroads mentioned above would require the consent of the Chinese side, and that the "claims of the Soviet Union should be unquestionably fulfilled after Japan has been defeated".

Harriman writes in his memoirs that he objected to the wording used with regard to the pre-eminent interests and rights of the Soviet Union, and even tried to convince Roosevelt to oppose this formulation. But the President refused; he considered it perfectly natural that in this matter the interests of the Soviet Union were pre-eminent over those of the USA and Britain.

An Example of Equitable Relations

The conference in the Crimea between the leaders of the USA, the USSR, and Great Britain had a great historic significance. It was one of the most important international conferences held during the war, and an outstanding milestone in cooperation among the powers of the anti-Hitler coalition in the conduct of the war against the common enemy. The adoption of agreed decisions on important questions at the conference demonstrated yet again that effective cooperation is possible among states with different social systems. Addressing Congress immediately after his return from Yalta, President Roosevelt declared:

"The Conference in the Crimea was a turning point—I hope in our history and therefore in the history of the world... The Crimea Conference ... ought to spell the end of the system of unilateral action, the exclusive alliances, the spheres of influence, the balances of power, and all the other expedients that have been tried for centuries—and have always failed. We propose to substitute for all these, a universal organisation in which all peace-loving Nations will finally have a chance to join."¹

The essence of the Yalta decisions was that they considered the interests of all sides. The meeting in the Crimea might well serve as an example of equitable relations in the international arena. In effect, it signalled recognition of the principle of peaceful co-existence by states with different social systems.

Harry Hopkins summed up the Yalta Conference in these words: "We really believed in our hearts that this was the dawn of the new day we had all been praying for and talking about for so many years. We were absolutely certain that we had won the first great victory of the peace—and, by 'we' I mean all of us, the whole civilized human race. The Russians had proved that they could be reasonable and farseeing and there wasn't any doubt in the minds of the President or any of us that we could live with them and get along with them peacefully for as far into the future as any of us could imagine."²

The decisions of the Yalta Conference helped to strengthen

¹ J. Burns, *Op. cit.*, p. 582.

² Henry H. Adams, *Harry Hopkins. A Biography*, p. 380.

the anti-fascist coalition in the final stage of the war and to win victory over Hitler's Germany. To carry out these decisions fully and in every respect was one of the chief goals of Soviet foreign policy not only at the end of the war but also in the years after.

While the conference was in session the Soviet armed forces continued to be active in offensive operations all along the Soviet-German front. In February and March of 1945, the Red Army concentrated its efforts on making a decisive advance towards Berlin. To this end Soviet forces launched offensives against the enemy's flanks in East Pomerania, Lower and Upper Silesia, and East Prussia, and fought stubbornly to broaden the bridgeheads they had captured on the left bank of the Oder in the neighbourhood of Kostrzyn and Frankfurt.

The enormous growth of the Soviet Union's international prestige could not help but have its effect on the course of the talks in Yalta. The brilliant victories of the Soviet armed forces ensured that the decisions made would be in the interests of freedom-loving peoples. It is highly indicative that *The Economist*, a conservative British magazine, wrote on February 3, 1945, that the most important questions were being settled not in embassies but on the battlefields of Pomerania and Brandenburg.

On the whole, the work of the Yalta Conference proceeded in a constructive spirit, in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and cooperation. The participants had full right to declare: "Our meeting here in the Crimea has reaffirmed our common determination to maintain and strengthen in the peace to come that unity of purpose and of action which has made victory possible and certain for the United Nations in this war. We believe that this is a sacred obligation which our Governments owe to our peoples and to all the peoples of the world." The declaration of the three leaders ended with these words:

"Victory in this war and establishment of the proposed international organisation will provide the greatest opportunity in all history to create in the years to come the essential conditions of such a peace."

The goals proclaimed in Yalta by the leaders of the anti-Hitler coalition were, however, not at all to the liking of those who were preparing to unleash a cold war, and this explains their subsequent attacks on the Yalta Conference.

Between Yalta and Potsdam

The Berne Incident

In the latter half of February, 1945, the Office of Strategic Services of the USA (the American intelligence service, headed at that time by General William Donovan) received word from neutral Switzerland that General Karl Wolff, the commander of the SS in Italy, was trying to establish contact with the Western Allies regarding terms for ending Germany's resistance in Northern Italy. Following a preliminary check on this information, General Wolff was invited to Zurich for a meeting with Allen Dulles, the head of the American intelligence service in Switzerland. After this meeting, Dulles sent a message to Washington recommending that the talks be continued; they took place in Berne, under the greatest secrecy.

It was only on March 12 that the American ambassador in Moscow was instructed to notify the Soviet government of the talks that had taken place. Harriman met with Molotov and told him that General Wolff was discussing with representatives of the American and British armies in Berne the question of capitulation by the German armed forces in Northern Italy. The ambassador added that British Field Marshal Alexander had been told to send officers to Berne for talks with German emissaries, and inquired about the Soviet government's views on this matter.

On the same day, People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs Molotov replied that the Soviet government did not object to the talks with General Wolff in Berne, but that officers representing the Soviet military command should take part in them as well. At the time the USSR did not have diplomatic relations with Switzerland, and Molotov expressed the hope that the United States would help to arrange for three Soviet officers to go there and join the talks in Berne.

The Americans refused. Harriman claims the initiative in this; he writes that when he reported to Washington on his meeting with Molotov he advised that Moscow's request be turned down, since there would be no political advantage for the Western Allies in bringing the USSR in. He warned that if the Russians were admitted to these "highly delicate" talks they might complicate things by making embarrassing demands. It is difficult to

say whether at this stage Roosevelt was told about the problem, but it is certain that General Marshall supported Harriman, and that instructions to this effect were sent to him in Moscow.

On March 16, the US embassy sent Molotov a letter saying that the government of the United States had formally declined the Soviet request. The same day, Molotov sent Harriman a letter saying that "the United States government's refusal to have Soviet representatives take part in the Berne talks was totally unexpected for the Soviet government, and is incomprehensible in view of the alliance between our countries. The Soviet government therefore considers it impossible to give its consent to talks in Berne between American and British representatives and representatives of the German command, and insists that the talks begun be broken off."

The Soviet government also insisted that in future it should be made impossible for separate talks with the Germans to be held by one or two of the Allied powers without the participation of all.

In a letter dated March 21, the American side made every effort to justify itself, offering assurances that the talks in Berne were purely military and claiming that the Soviet government had misconstrued the aim of the contact. The Western Allies tried to pretend that the talks dealt with the capitulation of German forces in a limited sector of the front only, and that therefore the question fell within the competence of the military command concerned. But the refusal of the USA and Britain to admit Soviet representatives to these talks showed otherwise: there is no doubt that what took place was an attempt to make a deal with the enemy behind the back of one of the three chief members of the anti-Hitler coalition. Molotov drew attention to this in his March 22 letter to Harriman: "I must say that I see no basis whatever for your statement that the Soviet government has misconstrued the aim of the contact in Berne between the German general Wolff and representatives of Field Marshal Alexander. What we have here is not a misconstruction of the aim of the contact, and not a misunderstanding, but something worse.

"It is evident from your letter of March 12 that General Wolff and the persons accompanying him came to Berne for talks with representatives of the Anglo-American command con-

cerning the capitulation of German forces in Northern Italy. When the Soviet government declared it would be necessary for representatives of the Soviet Military Command to take part in these talks, this was rejected.

"And so for the past two weeks talks have been going on in Berne—behind the back of the Soviet Union, which is bearing the main burden of the war against Germany—between representatives of the German command, on the one hand, and the American and the British command on the other. The Soviet government considers this completely inadmissible and insists on the demand set forth in my letter of March 16 of this year."

This affair had become so serious that President Roosevelt entered into the correspondence. On March 25 a personal, top-secret message from him to Stalin was received in the Kremlin. In it Roosevelt said that he had learned of the exchange of letters between Harriman and Molotov concerning the talks in Switzerland, and expressed the opinion that "the facts of this matter . . . have, through a misunderstanding, not been correctly presented to you". Then Roosevelt set forth in some detail the American version of the history of the talks, which purportedly came to nothing more than an attempt "to arrange with any competent German officers for a conference to discuss details of the surrender with Field Marshal Alexander at his headquarters in Italy". Having thus depicted the situation, Roosevelt added that "if such a meeting could be arranged Soviet representatives would, of course, be welcome". Saying that up to that time attempts to arrange a meeting had met with no success, the President assured Stalin he would be glad to have "at any discussion of the details of surrender by our commander of American forces in the field the benefit of the experience and advice of any of your officers who can be present". At the same time, Roosevelt declared, "I cannot agree to suspend investigation of the possibility" of capitulation.

The message ended on a conciliatory note: "I hope you will point out to the Soviet officials concerned the desirability and necessity of taking prompt and effective action without any delay to effect the surrender of any enemy military forces that are opposed to American forces in the field."¹

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. 2, pp. 198-99.

It is impossible not to see that those who helped compose this message were trying to present in an innocent light talks that could have ruinous consequences. Furthermore, it was pretended that all that was involved during the contacts with General Wolff, was merely a technical matter—the organisation of a meeting in Caserta, at Field Marshal Alexander's headquarters. Data that the Soviet government had from other sources made it clear, though, that serious talks were already underway; the Americans were only trying to obscure the facts. The Soviet side could not, of course, ignore this.

Stalin informed Roosevelt in a message dated March 29 that he was not against, but rather entirely for, making use of cases of disintegration in the German armies to hasten their surrender in any sector and to encourage them to open the front to Allied forces.

He continued: "But I agree to such talks with the enemy only . . . if the opportunity for the Germans to manoeuvre and to use the talks for switching troops to other sectors, above all to the Soviet front, is precluded.

"And it was solely with an eye to providing this guarantee that the Soviet Government found it necessary to have representatives of its Military Command take part in such negotiations with the enemy wherever they might take place—whether in Berne or in Caserta. I cannot understand why the representatives of the Soviet Command have been excluded from the talks and in what way they could have handicapped the representatives of the Allied Command.

"I must tell you for your information that the Germans have already taken advantage of the talks with the Allied Command to move three divisions from Northern Italy to the Soviet front."¹

Stalin went on to say that it had been declared in Yalta that coordinated thrusts should be made against the Germans from the west, south, and east, the intention being to pin the enemy down and make it impossible to effect necessary transfers of troops. This was what the Soviet command was, in fact, doing. He pointed out that the German forces at Danzig and Königsberg were encircled, and could not open the front to Soviet forces because the front had moved far to the west. The position of

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. 2, pp. 200-01.

the Germans in Northern Italy was completely different, he said. They were not surrounded. And if in Northern Italy they were seeking negotiations so as to open the front to the Allied forces, this meant they "must have some other, more far-reaching aims affecting the destiny of Germany".¹

Meanwhile, the separate talks in Berne were being continued. As it became more deeply involved, the American government realised it must somehow account to the Soviet side for the situation. Moreover, it was not impossible that information might leak out.

On April 1, another message was received from Roosevelt. It said that "an atmosphere of regrettable apprehension and mistrust" had arisen around the "possible future negotiations with the Germans for surrender of their forces in Italy". Roosevelt offered assurances that "no negotiations for surrender have been entered into, and if there should be any negotiations they will be conducted at Caserta with your representatives present throughout". He said the entire episode had "arisen through the initiative of a German officer reputed to be close to Himmler and there is, of course, a strong possibility that his sole purpose is to create suspicion and distrust between the Allies".²

This was getting closer to the truth, but the Americans still had not revealed the true meaning of the talks in Berne. For this reason the Soviet side found it necessary to give Roosevelt a more detailed description of the information it had. This was done in Stalin's telegram of April 3, 1945:

"You are quite right in saying, with reference to the talks between the Anglo-American and German Commands in Berne or elsewhere, that 'the matter now stands in an atmosphere of regrettable apprehension and mistrust'.

"You affirm that so far no negotiations have been entered into. Apparently you are not fully informed. As regards my military colleagues, they, on the basis of information in their possession, are sure that negotiations did take place and that they ended in an agreement with the Germans, whereby the German Commander on the Western Front, Marshal Kesselring, is to open the front to the Anglo-American troops and let them move east,

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*, pp. 204-05.

while the British and Americans have promised, in exchange, to ease the armistice terms for the Germans.

"I think that my colleagues are not very far from the truth. If the contrary were the case the exclusion of representatives of the Soviet Command from the Berne talks would be inexplicable.

"Nor can I account for the reticence of the British, who have left it to you to carry on a correspondence with me on this unpleasant matter, while they themselves maintain silence, although it is known that the initiative in the matter of the Berne negotiations belongs to the British.

"I realise that there are certain advantages resulting to the Anglo-American troops from these separate negotiations in Berne or in some other place, seeing that the Anglo-American troops are enabled to advance into the heart of Germany almost without resistance; but why conceal this from the Russians, and why were the Russians, their Allies, not forewarned?

"And so what we have at the moment is that the Germans on the Western Front have in fact ceased the war against Britain and America. At the same time they continue the war against Russia, the Ally of Britain and the USA.

"Clearly this situation cannot help preserve and promote trust between our countries.

"I have already written in a previous message, and I think I must repeat, that I and my colleagues would never in any circumstances have taken such a hazardous step, for we realise that a momentary advantage, no matter how great, is overshadowed by the fundamental advantage of preserving and promoting trust between Allies."¹

The Americans, though, were still unwilling to admit they had conducted separate talks with the Nazis behind the back of their Soviet Ally. Roosevelt's reply was full of indignation at Moscow's lack of belief in the American version. The President reiterated that there had been no negotiations in Berne and that the meeting that took place there was not at all political. At the same time, the message contained certain new elements. Roosevelt declared that if any enemy armies in Italy were to capitulate, the Allies would not violate their agreed principle of unconditional surrender. This was undoubtedly a belated attempt to explain

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. 2, pp. 265-66.

the fact that the German command had in actuality opened the front in Italy, where only an insignificant number of troops remained, and was using the talks as a smokescreen for rapidly transferring its most battle-worthy units to the Soviet-German front.

It later became known from German archival documents that many of the Third Reich's bosses, sensing their ineluctable ruin, saw a last hope in making a deal with Britain and the USA: they would cease resistance in the west and concentrate all their forces in the east so as to hold back the Red Army for as long as they could. Furthermore, the Nazis were prepared to surrender as much German territory as possible to the Western Allies. A memorandum to the Führer from Minister of Munitions Albert Speer spoke of the catastrophic consequences that would follow from Soviet occupation of the Silesian industrial region. "The war is lost," the memorandum began. Speer based this conclusion on the following circumstances: as a result of the destruction caused by bombing in the Ruhr, Silesia was supplying sixty per cent of Germany's coal; the Reich's railroads, power plants, and factories had only a two weeks' supply; the loss of Silesia would thus bring complete disaster.

Hitler refused to discuss these unpleasant facts. But his closest advisers were trying more and more feverishly to find a way out of the desperate situation. On January 25, 1945, General Guderian, fully understanding the hopelessness of Germany's position, suggested to Minister of Foreign Affairs Ribbentrop that an attempt be made to reach agreement with the Western powers on an immediate armistice in the west so that the military command's remaining forces could be concentrated in the east. Two days later, at a situation conference in the Reichskanzlei, there was a curious exchange of opinions. It is clear from the minutes that Hitler, Goering, and other German leaders thought it possible to make a separate deal with the Western powers, and that moreover the German side would not even have to take the initiative: the British and the Americans themselves would be looking for a chance to join forces with the Reich against Bolshevism.

It is worthwhile citing the minutes:

"Hitler: Do you think the English are enthusiastic about all the Russia developments?"

"Goering: They certainly didn't plan that we hold them off while the Russians conquer all of Germany."

"Jodl: They have always regarded the Russians with suspicion."

"Goering: If this goes on we will get a telegram (from the English) in a few days."¹

But the Nazi bigwigs did not confine themselves to waiting passively for proposals from the West. Himmler, through agents in Switzerland, established contact with Allen Dulles in order to come to terms with the Western Allies on an armistice and letting the Anglo-American forces into the heart of Germany, while all German forces were concentrated against the Red Army in the east. Somewhat later Goering established contact with the Western Allies through a Swedish emissary, Count Bernadotte. It has long been no secret that Churchill, and certain highly influential American politicians too, were inclined to the idea of joining the Germans in their fight against the Soviet Union.

The willingness of the British and the Americans to engage in separate negotiations was, of course, a glaring contradiction to their obligations as allies. This was why they reacted so skittishly when the Soviet side uncovered their intriguing. Roosevelt's next telegram on this matter ended on a sharp note: "Frankly I cannot avoid a feeling of bitter resentment toward your informers, whoever they are, for such vile misrepresentations of my actions or those of my trusted subordinates."²

The possibility cannot be excluded, of course, that President Roosevelt was in fact not aware of the whole truth about the Berne talks, that his trusted subordinates were hiding their real intentions from him. With all that we now know about the dirty doings of the CIA, it may be supposed that its predecessor, the Services, conducted some of its clandestine operations without the President's knowledge. At any rate, the Soviet side thought it needful to explain patiently once again to Roosevelt how it understood the situation that had arisen:

"My point," Stalin wrote, "is that in the course of our correspondence a difference of views has arisen over what an Ally may

¹ William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich. A History of Nazi Germany*, p. 1098.

² *Correspondence*, Vol. 2, p. 208.

permit himself with regard to another and what he may not. We Russians believe that, in view of the present situation on the fronts, a situation in which the enemy is faced with inevitable surrender, whenever the representatives of one of the Allies meet the Germans to discuss surrender terms, the representatives of the other Ally should be enabled to take part in the meeting. That is absolutely necessary, at least when the other Ally seeks participation in the meeting. The Americans and British, however, have a different opinion—they hold that the Russian point of view is wrong. For that reason they have denied the Russians the right to be present at the meeting with the Germans in Switzerland. I have already written to you, and I see no harm in repeating that, given a similar situation, the Russians would never have denied the Americans and British the right to attend such a meeting. I still consider the Russian point of view to be the only correct one, because it precludes mutual suspicions and gives the enemy no chance to sow distrust between us.”¹

Stalin pointed out that the Germans had 147 divisions on the Eastern front, and could without detriment to themselves send 15 to 20 divisions to the aid of their forces in the west. They were not doing this, however, but continued to fight ferociously for every little station; meanwhile, in the west, important cities in the heart of Germany—such as Osnabrück, Mannheim, and Kassel—were surrendering without any resistance whatever. “As regards those who supply my information,” Stalin continued, “I can assure you that they are honest and unassuming people who carry out their duties conscientiously and who have no intention of affronting anybody. They have been tested in action on numerous occasions.”²

The question was closed by a conciliatory telegram from Roosevelt that reached Moscow on April 13. It said:

“Thank you for your frank explanation of the Soviet point of view on the Berne incident which it now appears has faded into the past without having accomplished any useful purpose.

“In any event, there must not be mutual distrust, and minor misunderstandings of this character should not arise in the future. I feel sure that when our armies make contact in Germany and

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 208-09.

² *Ibid.*, p. 209.

join in a fully coordinated offensive the Nazi armies will disintegrate.”¹

This was not only the final dispatch on the Berne incident but indeed the last telegram ever written by President Roosevelt. It was sent on April 12, just a few hours before he died.

Roosevelt's Death

At about one o'clock in the morning, during a reception being held in honour of a member of the Moscow embassy's staff who was departing for Washington, Ambassador Harriman received word that the President had died. Without telling his guests what had happened, he bade them good night. When the last of them had left Spaso House, he telephoned Molotov in the Kremlin to tell him the sad news and ask for a meeting. Molotov, however, insisted on coming to the ambassadorial residence himself, despite the late hour. Soon he was entering the main hall of the mansion, where a large portrait of Roosevelt, framed in black crêpe, stood on a marble pedestal. Beside it stood the United States flag to which a black ribbon had also been attached.

In his report to Washington on this meeting, Harriman said that Molotov “seemed deeply moved and disturbed. He stayed for some time talking about the part President Roosevelt had played in the war and in the plans for peace, of the respect Marshal Stalin and all the Russian people had had for him and how much Marshal Stalin had valued his visit to Yalta.”²

Harriman then brought the conversation around to President Truman. He assured Molotov that the new administration would continue President Roosevelt's policies.

As he was seeing Molotov off, Harriman asked that a meeting be arranged between himself and Marshal Stalin. In his message to the new President, Harriman said he wanted to assure Stalin of the continuity of US policy and that the USA would “make every effort to get us back as far as possible to the spirit and atmosphere of the Crimea Conference”.³

It is plain that such assurances were mostly *pro forma*: Har-

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. 2, p. 214.

² Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, p. 440.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 441.

riman could not fail to see that a new man in the White House, and especially one like Truman, whose antipathy towards the Soviet Union was widely known, would mean changes in the way American policy was carried out—changes in the direction of harshness. This was why, in the same telegram, he raised the question of coming to Washington to acquaint himself with how things stood. In a few hours a message arrived from Secretary of State Stettinius in Washington, who had meanwhile consulted with Truman; it said “now of all times” it was essential that Harriman be present in Moscow. The ambassador was a little discouraged by this answer; he thought it important to establish closer contact with Truman. But since his own trip to the USA was to be postponed, Harriman decided to use the upcoming meeting with Stalin to raise once again the question of Molotov’s travelling to San Francisco in the next few days for the United Nations conference; on his way there the People’s Commissar of Foreign Affairs could stop over in Washington for a talk with the new President.

The heads of the Soviet and the American governments had been discussing Soviet representation at the first UN conference in their correspondence for some time already. Stalin said it would be impossible for Molotov to go to San Francisco in April of 1945, pointing out that the People’s Commissar was very busy in connection with the approaching session of the USSR Supreme Soviet, and had other duties as well. Roosevelt insisted, arguing that “Mr. Molotov’s absence will be construed all over the world as a lack of comparable interest in the great objectives of this Conference on the part of the Soviet Government”.¹

To this Stalin answered on March 27:

“We highly value and attach great importance to the San Francisco Conference to lay the foundations of an international organisation for peace and security of the nations, but present circumstances preclude V. M. Molotov’s attendance. I and Molotov are very sorry about this, but the convening, at the instance of Deputies to the Supreme Soviet, of a session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in April, at which Molotov’s attendance is imperative, makes it impossible for him to attend even the opening session of the Conference.

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. 2, p. 197.

"You are aware that Ambassador Gromyko successfully coped with his task at Dumbarton Oaks, and we are certain that he will ably head the Soviet Delegation at San Francisco.

"As to the different interpretations, you will appreciate that they cannot determine the decisions to be taken."¹

Here the matter had been dropped. But now, with the inauguration of a new President, a different situation had come about: a trip to the USA by Molotov might be perceived as an expression of the intent to continue the policy of cooperation between the two powers. "This was a very serious emotional moment," Harriman recalls. "Before I went over to see Stalin I had thought hard about what I might ask him to do. So it was no accident."²

The meeting took place at eight o'clock in the evening of April 13. Molotov was also present. Here is how the conversation is described in Harriman's memoirs:

"Stalin greeted Harriman in silence . . . holding his hand for perhaps thirty seconds before asking him to sit down. He appeared deeply distressed and questioned the Ambassador closely about the circumstances of Roosevelt's death. He did not believe, Stalin said, that there would be any change in American policy under Truman. Harriman agreed that this would be true in those areas where the President had made his plans clear, such as the war and foreign policy. Truman had been a Roosevelt man in his Senate days, faithfully following the President's lead. He was a man whom Stalin would like, Harriman added, a man of action, not of words."³

Harriman then moved to his main concern. He said that President Truman could not, of course, enjoy the great prestige President Roosevelt had. Until he became Vice-President, he had been little known either in the United States or abroad. This, said Harriman, could not help but cause a period of uncertainty, both within and outside the country—not only regarding the conduct of the war, but on all questions of foreign and domestic policy. The conference in San Francisco, for instance, might cause more difficulties. America did not know whether President Truman could carry through Roosevelt's programme. The American peo-

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. 2, pp. 199-200.

² Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, p. 441.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 441-42.

ple, Harriman continued, knew that President Roosevelt and Marshal Stalin had close personal relations and that this had significantly influenced American-Soviet relations.

Here Stalin interrupted Harriman to say that although Roosevelt had died his cause must live on. "We will support President Truman with all our strength and all our will," he declared, and asked the ambassador to say as much to the new President.

Harriman promised to do this at once, and added that he thought the most effective way to convince American public opinion and the whole world that the Soviet Union wanted to continue its cooperation with the Americans and the other United Nations would be for Molotov to go to the United States at once. He could stop over in Washington to meet with the new President and then proceed on to San Francisco and spend at least a few days there.

After a brief exchange between him and Molotov on the dates of the San Francisco conference and of the session of the USSR Supreme Soviet, Stalin inquired if the ambassador was expressing his personal opinion only. Harriman answered that this was so, but went on to say he was confident this was also the view of the President and the Secretary of State.

"I felt sure that they would be ready to confirm what I had said,"¹ Harriman writes.

Stalin then said that although it would be very difficult for Molotov to go to the United States at that time he thought it might be arranged nevertheless.

That same day the head of the Soviet government sent his condolences to Truman:

"On behalf of the Soviet Government and on my own behalf I express to the Government of the United States of America deep regret at the untimely death of President Roosevelt. . .

"The Government of the Soviet Union expresses its heartfelt sympathy with the American people in their grievous loss and its confidence that the policy of cooperation between the Great Powers who have borne the brunt of the war against the common foe will be promoted in the future as well."²

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 443.

² *Correspondence*, Vol. 2, p. 214.

Soon afterwards, as a token of the Soviet people's respect for this great American, one of the main thoroughfares in Yalta was renamed Franklin Roosevelt Street.

Berlin had its own reaction to the death of Roosevelt. As the end approached, it was still hoped there that a miracle might occur. Hitler was suffering more and more frequently from attacks of hysteria, and to calm him on those April evenings Goebbels read selections from Carlyle's *History of Frederick the Great* to him. There it was told how during the Seven Years' War King Frederick had found himself in a desperate position, and had even declared that if things did not take a turn for the better by February 15 he would take poison. But on February 12 Empress Elizabeth of Russia died; her successor, Peter the Third, was a friend and admirer of Frederick's. Thus Goebbels read that the House of Brandenburg had been saved by a miracle, and old horoscopes were brought out that predicted a change in favour of Germany in mid-April, 1945.

On April 13, when Goebbels learned of Roosevelt's death, he immediately telephoned Hitler, who was hiding in the bunker of the Reichskanzlei.

"My Fuehrer," Goebbels exclaimed, "I congratulate you! Roosevelt is dead! It is written in the stars that the second half of April will be the turning point for us. This is Friday, April the thirteenth. It is the turning point!"¹

The miracle, however, never came.

Confrontation in the White House

By agreeing to send People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs Molotov to the United States, the Soviet government had made a gesture of good will towards the Truman administration. There was also, of course, a clear practical reason for sending a high-ranking Soviet official to Washington. Immediate, personal contact with the new President would make it possible to determine the mood in the White House and to exchange opinions on the future of Soviet-American relations. There were also concrete areas which it would be useful to discuss on a high level: the final stage in the war against Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union's

¹ William L. Shirer, *Op. cit.*, p. 1110.

upcoming entry into the war in the Far East, and the problems involved in post-war settlement. At the same time it was to be expected that the American side would raise once more the question of Poland, and in particular of the formation of a government including the London Poles.

As can be seen in the correspondence between Washington and Moscow, this question was posed again and again during the last weeks of Roosevelt's life. In a message sent to Stalin on April 1, 1945, dissatisfaction was expressed that the commission set up according to the decision of the Yalta Conference and composed of the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the USSR and the ambassadors of the USA and Great Britain in Moscow had not moved forward on the question of forming a Polish government. The President upheld the American and British ambassadors' demand that an essentially new government be created, even though it had been decided in Yalta that the provisional government in Warsaw should serve as the base for such reorganisation. Roosevelt also supported the Commission's Western members in their claim that each of them had the right to invite as many persons as they liked to the talks, whether from Poland itself or from London, and that these persons should be allowed to nominate to the commission further candidates for the new government of Poland.

Roosevelt took a rather harsh tone in setting forth these claims. "I wish I could convey to you," he wrote, "how important it is for the successful development of our program of international collaboration that this Polish question be settled fairly and speedily. If this is not done all of the difficulties and dangers to Allied unity which we had so much in mind in reaching our decisions at the Crimea will face us in an even more acute form."¹

Stalin replied to this on April 7. He agreed that things had reached a dead end on the Polish question, and said he thought the reason was that the US and the British ambassadors in Moscow, as members of the Moscow commission, had departed from the theses of the Yalta Conference by introducing new elements. "At the Crimea Conference," he explained, "the three of us regarded the Polish Provisional Government as the government

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. 2, p. 204.

now functioning in Poland and subject to reconstruction, as the government that should be the core of a new Government of National Unity. The US and British Ambassadors in Moscow, however, have departed from that thesis; they ignore the Polish Provisional Government, pay no heed to it and at best place individuals in Poland and London on a par with the Provisional Government. Furthermore, they hold that reconstruction of the Provisional Government should be understood in terms of its abolition and the establishment of an entirely new government. . .

"Obviously this thesis of the US and British Ambassadors cannot but be strongly resented by the Polish Provisional Government. As regards the Soviet Union, it certainly cannot accept a thesis that is tantamount to direct violation of the Crimea Conference decisions."¹

After a concrete examination of the demands being made by the American and British ambassadors, Stalin indicated that it was their position which was preventing a settlement of the Polish question. The Soviet side suggested a number of practical steps. First of all, it should be established that reconstruction of the Provisional Government did not mean its dissolution but rather its expansion, and that it was the Provisional Government which should be the core of the future Government of National Unity. It was suggested that only eight Polish leaders be invited to Moscow, as had been envisaged at the Crimea Conference: five from Poland and three from London. Furthermore, only such persons should be invited who recognised the Crimea Conference's decisions on Poland and were really seeking to establish friendly relations between Poland and the Soviet Union. It was also proposed that the reconstruction of the Provisional Government be carried out by replacing a certain number of its ministers with Polish leaders who had not been included earlier. "I think if these comments are taken into consideration," Stalin's message concluded, "the Polish question can be settled in a short time."²

The reply to these Soviet proposals was made after the death of Roosevelt, on April 18, in a joint message from Churchill and Truman. The two men continued to insist adamantly on con-

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. 2, pp. 211-12.

² *Ibid.*, p. 213.

ditions that were completely unacceptable both to the Soviet Union and to the Polish Provisional Government, and that represented a clear departure from the theses agreed on in Yalta. Under Truman, moreover, this negative position took on an even greater obduracy.

On April 13, immediately after Truman became president, he sent a telegram to Churchill saying that he looked upon the Polish question as a "pressing and dangerous problem" and that he was prepared for "another go" at Stalin. Thus, in the very first days of his presidency, Truman had decided to do battle with the Soviet Union over the Polish question. It was at this same time that Harriman was instructed to tell Stalin at their next meeting that Washington attached the utmost importance to the Polish question.

It must be said that the moment was not particularly favourable for an American *démarche* of this sort: the crew of one of the American planes that had landed at an airfield near Poltava after a bombing mission deep into Germany had tried to take a young Pole, dressed in the uniform of an American soldier, out of the USSR illegally. The attempt had been foiled, and the Soviet side naturally reacted to it in a most vigorous manner. All the American planes in Poltava were grounded, and an appropriate representation was made to the American embassy.

Stalin mentioned this incident to Harriman at their next meeting, and accused the Americans of giving support to the reactionary Polish underground in its struggle against the Red Army.

Harriman seized the opportunity to point out that "Poland had become the principal issue clouding Soviet-American relations".¹ He went on to say that "Roosevelt had been trying to resolve it at the time of his death . . . and Truman was just as determined to reach an understanding".² The ambassador suggested that Stalin authorise Molotov to try to reach an agreement on this matter with Stettinius and Eden during his visit in the United States.

Stalin, without any further inquiries, said that Molotov would receive relevant instructions.

¹ Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, p. 445.

² *Ibid.*

Soon after this conversation, Harriman left Moscow; he was anxious to meet with the new President before the Soviet People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs arrived in the US capital. He departed on April 17 and travelled by plane across the Balkans and Italy to the Azores and on to Washington, arriving in only forty-eight hours—record time for those days. Molotov chose the longer route across Siberia and Alaska, and arrived in Washington considerably later. Harriman made use of the interval to prepare Truman for the meeting.

Harriman had his first talk with the new President on April 20. It can be seen from Harriman's own description of this meeting that he tried his best to move Truman towards a "firmer" attitude towards the Soviet Union. The ambassador acknowledged that Moscow was pursuing a policy of cooperation with the United States and Britain, but he strongly condemned the political developments taking place in Eastern Europe. At the time, of course, nothing else could have been expected from Harriman, who represented the interests of big business and finance in the USA.

Needless to say, the Soviet Union had not in any way broken the understanding reached earlier. The problem lay elsewhere: Soviet interest in the establishment of friendly regimes in this region, and particularly in those countries that directly bordered on the USSR, evoked a negative reaction in capitalist quarters in the West, who saw in this a threat to their own social and political positions. It was this which guided Harriman in his presentation to Truman. He said that the Russians would need American help for reconstruction after the war, and so would not want a break with the USA; thus Washington could, without serious risk, to "stand firm" on all the major issues.

This pleased Truman. He remarked complacently that he was not afraid of the Russians, that he would be "firm but fair" with them. "Anyway," he said, "the Russians need us more than we need them."¹

Harriman then said that despite all the difficulties, he thought it possible to achieve "a workable relationship with the Russians", and added that "both sides would have to make concessions in the process of give-and-take".² Truman agreed it would

¹ Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, p. 447.

² *Ibid.*, p. 448.

be unrealistic to expect 100 per cent Soviet cooperation with American proposals, and said he hoped for 85 per cent; by this he meant that he intended to force Moscow into making serious concessions. "I gained great respect for Truman at once," Harriman writes in summing this part of the conversation.

Next the Polish question was discussed. The ambassador, mentioning the demands of the Western powers, warned that further pressure on Moscow might cause complications—the USSR might refuse to be part of the new international organisation. He asked whether Truman would be prepared to go ahead with plans for the United Nations even without the Russians.

Truman understood what the ambassador was asking about, but declined to make a direct answer. He said that the truth was that "without Russia there would be no world organization".¹

It is likely that there were some in the USA who were thinking at the time that the international organisation could operate without the Russians and indeed, against them. It goes without saying that the United States would have had unlimited sway in such an organisation, which might be called international but certainly not universal.

While in Washington, Harriman also met with the top officials of the State Department. He told them the time had come to remove the element of fear from American dealings with the Soviet Union and to demonstrate that the USA was determined to stand firm. When Harriman was asked about the British position, he answered that "London felt even more strongly than Washington. . . . But the British could not go it alone."²

All this could not help but heighten the anti-Soviet mood already in full flower in Washington. At this point, the Soviet People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs arrived in the capital.

Molotov's first meeting with Truman, on April 22, was formal and polite. Truman expressed admiration of the Soviet people, offered assurances that he intended to observe the agreements the USSR and the USA had made, and promised he would try to make it possible for the two countries to continue along the path marked out by Roosevelt. Matters connected with the creation of a new world-wide security organisation were then touched

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*, pp. 449-50.

upon briefly, and there was a preliminary exchange of opinions on the Polish situation. Each of the sides set out its already familiar position.

The next day, April 23, Truman called a special conference in the White House that included Stettinius, Stimson, Forrestal, Leahy, Marshall, King, Harriman, and General Deane, the head of the American military mission in the USSR. In his introductory remarks, Secretary of State Stettinius declared that a "complete deadlock" had been reached on the Polish question.

In a few hours Truman was to meet once again with Molotov, and he wanted to play out his scenario of the upcoming conversation for his advisers and try his arguments out on them. Truman began by saying he must stand up to the Russians now, or never. He intended to go ahead with the plans for a new international organisation under any circumstances; if the Russians would not join, they could "go to hell".

The President, as we see, had made up his mind he could get along without the Soviet Union in the new international organisation. He may even have thought that without the USSR he would be full master of the United Nations and could easily use it against the Soviet Union. Having formulated this new thesis, Truman invited his advisers to give their opinions.

Secretary of War Stimson was the first to speak. He urged a more cautious approach, pointing out that in big military affairs the Russians had always kept their word and often done more than they had promised.

Stimson was particularly shocked by the "rather brutal frankness" Truman intended to show in his conversation with Molotov. He expressed concern that strong words from the President on such an important problem might seriously complicate relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. He meant, in particular, the American side's interest in Soviet help in the Far East.

General Marshall also favoured more circumspection, but James Forrestal, then Secretary of the Navy, supported the President. He said Poland was not the only example of Russian unwillingness to reckon with the interests of the other Allies.

Admiral Leahy's position was midway between Stimson's and Forrestal's. He had been certain even at Yalta that the Soviet Union would insist on its own position, and argued that the

Yalta agreement on Poland "could be read two ways". He opposed a break with the USSR at that time.

At the end of the discussion Truman said he did not mean to present Molotov with an ultimatum. He would be "firm though not offensive".¹

When Molotov walked into the President's office in the White House that evening, Truman "went straight to the point", as Harriman says in his memoirs. The President expressed regret that no progress was being made on the Polish question. The United States, he declared, had gone as far as it could to meet the Russians' demands, but it "could not recognize a Polish government that failed to represent all democratic elements".² He reminded Molotov that Roosevelt has warned Stalin, in his message of April 1, that "no American policy, foreign or domestic, could succeed unless it enjoyed public confidence and support".³ Truman went on to say that Congress would have to approve allocations of funds for any economic aid after the war and that he saw no possibility of getting such measures through Congress unless they had public support. He hoped the Soviet government would keep this in mind.

To this thinly veiled threat, Molotov replied that the only acceptable basis for cooperation was for the governments of the three powers to treat each others as equals. One or two of them must not be allowed to attempt to force their will on a third. All the United States was demanding, Truman countered, was that the Soviets carry out the Yalta agreements on Poland.

To this Molotov answered that the Soviet government could not be accused of violating the agreement, since the other parties had abrogated it. Truman repeated in a sharp voice that the United States was prepared to carry out faithfully all the agreements signed at Yalta. He would demand the same of the Soviet Union, he said, and wanted this clearly understood in Moscow. Molotov answered that the Soviet government had always kept its promises in the past, and would continue to do so.

Harriman concludes his description of this scene with the following remark: "I was a little taken aback, frankly, when the

¹ Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, pp. 451-53.

² *Ibid.*, p. 453.

³ *Ibid.*

President attacked Molotov so vigorously. I suppose it was true that Molotov had never been talked to so bluntly before by a foreigner. . . I did regret that Truman went at it so hard because his behavior gave Molotov an excuse to tell Stalin that the Roosevelt policy was being abandoned. I regretted that Truman gave him the opportunity. I think it was a mistake, though not a decisive mistake."¹

After this confrontation in the White House, Molotov continued on to the West Coast to take part in the United Nations conference in San Francisco. He spent only a few days there, however, before returning to Moscow.

Victory Day

That Wednesday in May of 1945 began like any other working day. But the events that were to make May 9 Victory Day—a national holiday in the Soviet Union—had been underway for forty-eight hours. At 1:30 in the morning of May 7, Admiral Doenitz—whom Hitler had named as his successor before committing suicide in his bunker in the Reichskanzlei—thelegraphed to General Jodl from Flensburg the order to sign an act of unconditional surrender. This was done at 2:40 in a little school building in Reims, where General Eisenhower's headquarters were located. General Smith of the United States accepted the surrender for the Allies. The signature was witnessed by General Susloparov of the Soviet Union and General Savez of France. The German signatories were Admiral Friedenburg and General Jodl.

The latter asked permission to say a few words, and this was granted. "With this signature," Jodl said, "the German people and the German Armed Forces are, for better or worse, delivered into the hands of the victors. . . In this hour I can only express the hope that the victor will treat them with generosity."²

So at last the Nazi general had remembered the word "generosity", which up to that time had not figured in the lexicon of the Nazi butchers. Those present heard Jodl out in silence and made no reply. The ceremony was soon over.

The fighting did not cease at once, however. Throughout

¹ Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, pp. 453-54.

² William L. Shirer, *Op. cit.*, p. 1139.

May 7 and 8, a few of the Wehrmacht's units continued to resist. People were still dying, even in the last days of the Reich's death agony. It was only early in the morning of May 9 that the last guns fell silent in Europe and the bombings stopped. An unaccustomed—and long desired—silence descended for the first time since September 1, 1939, when Nazi Germany had unleashed the Second World War. In the five years, eight months, and eight days since then tens of millions of people had perished on countless battlefields, in bombed-out cities, and in Nazi concentration camps. Such was the awful harvest brought in by Hitler's mad dream of world domination.

The modest ceremony in Reims was entirely out of scale with the titanic armed conflict that had just ended. Furthermore, it was unthinkable that the Soviet Union, which had made the decisive contribution to the defeat of Hitler's Reich, should be represented only by an observer. The Soviet government insisted that the act of capitulation be signed before representatives of the supreme commands of all the powers in the anti-Hitler coalition. Berlin, the centre of Nazi aggression, would be the appropriate place for the signing. It was decided by the Allies that the Reims act of capitulation should be regarded as a preliminary protocol.

The act of unconditional surrender was signed in Berlin, in the Karlshorst, at forty-three minutes after midnight on May 9. The German signatories were Field Marshal Keitel, General Stumpf, and Admiral Friedenburg, who had received authorisation from Doenitz. This was announced in Moscow on the morning of May 9, which at the same time was proclaimed as Victory Day.

We had grown so accustomed, during the years of the war, to working without days off or vacations that no one seemed to know what to do with those first free hours. I phoned around to my friends, and we agreed to meet in Red Square that evening. Huge crowds converged there that night; the joy and merriment were beyond description. Strangers hugged one another, laughing and crying. Joy at our magnificent victory filled everyone, young and old alike. The exulting crowds overflowed from Red Square and filled Okhotny Ryad, Manège Square, Mokhovaya, and adjoining streets.

Harry Hopkins's Mission

Harry Hopkins, a close friend and associate of Roosevelt, had long been ill, and his health deteriorated still further after the President's death. He retired to a modest house in Georgetown, a fashionable section of Washington. He never went out, and received hardly any visitors. Most of his time was spent lying in bed. But when, shortly after the UN conference in San Francisco, Harriman called on him to suggest that he go to Moscow, Hopkins agreed without a minute's hesitation.

The idea behind this unusual mission has a history of its own. The perceptible deterioration in Soviet-American relations after Truman took over at the White House caused widespread and serious concern among the American public and also within the cabinet, which for some time after the new President took office continued to be made up chiefly of men who had worked with Roosevelt. There were heated debates in top government echelons about policy towards the Soviet Union in the future. The exchange of opinions that had taken place between Truman and his closest advisers during Molotov's visit to Washington in April showed that many influential members of the administration did not support the President's intention to make a sharp turn towards confrontation. The prevailing mood in the mass media was also in favour of continuing the policy of cooperation with the USSR. Harriman had a chance to see this for himself in San Francisco when he addressed journalists who were covering the first United Nations conference. His "hard-line" pronouncements were met with indignation, and many of the journalists walked out in protest.

These conditions made it necessary for Truman and his supporters to resort to stratagems. In reviewing Washington's actions at this time it becomes obvious that simultaneous efforts were made along several lines. First, the White House decided to pour oil on the troubled waters with a public demonstration of willingness to continue cooperating with the Soviet Union. Conditions were to be made, however, which were patently unacceptable to Moscow. Hence the second line: to blame the Soviet Union for making it impossible to continue Roosevelt's policy. The third line of effort was to instil antagonism towards the Soviet Union into public opinion through the mass media.

Here, though, a difficulty arose: Truman, as we have seen, had already let the cat out of the bag with the inexcusable rudeness he had shown in his conversation with the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the USSR. The new President committed another hostile act against the USA's Soviet Ally on May 8, 1945, when he signed an order for sharp reductions in Lend-Lease deliveries to the Soviet Union. This was done without any prior consultation with Moscow, and in a most insolent way. The day after the act was signed, orders were given to stop the loading of materials for the USSR in American ports and ships already en route were called back. Many Americans in high places, including Harriman, were shocked by Truman's crude tactics, which were clearly aimed at winning political concessions by using economic pressure. The President was urgently advised to revoke his order, and after some time he did so. But a significant blow had already been dealt to Soviet-American relations, and this fact did not fail to register in Moscow.

In the light of what has been said, it is not difficult to guess Washington's real motives or to see the true worth of Truman's declarations of good intent. It was at this point, evidently, that the idea of sending Harry Hopkins to Moscow arose. There is reason to believe that Hopkins himself was not privy to all the details of Washington's backstage manoeuvrings, although he was briefed by Truman before his departure. He agreed to make the trip, in spite of his poor health, because he was a firm advocate of Soviet-American cooperation. Seeing that relations between the two countries were rapidly deteriorating, he ardently hoped that the situation could still be remedied. He was ready to make a personal contribution to this cause. The reason why the White House settled on Hopkins as its emissary is plain to see. He had been a close and trusted adviser of Roosevelt, and had helped lay the plans for post-war cooperation with the Soviet Union. He was trusted by the Soviet government and by Stalin personally, and moreover it was well remembered in Moscow that in the dark days of July 1941, it was Hopkins whom Roosevelt had sent to the Soviet capital to find out whether the Soviet Union would be able to withstand the Nazis; after acquainting himself with the situation, he had expressed the firm conviction that Hitler would not get through. Lastly, Hopkins was a strong proponent of post-war settlement under which cooperation on an

equal footing could develop among all nations, and especially between the United States and the Soviet Union; thus he could speak without duplicity of the importance and necessity of continuing the political course Roosevelt had worked out with his participation.

Hopkins's stay in Moscow is described in considerable detail in his biography and in Harriman's memoirs.

Hopkins arrived in Moscow on May 25. At eight the next evening he and Harriman were received by Stalin in the Kremlin. Stalin greeted Hopkins as an old friend, and listened with attention to his account of Roosevelt's last days. Hopkins then began to speak of the late President's great confidence that America and Russia, having fought together in wartime, would be able to work together in peacetime. He referred to Roosevelt's great respect for Stalin, and recalled his own mission to Moscow in the summer of 1941 and Roosevelt's speedy decision to help the Soviet Union, even though many thought at the time that Hitler would smash the USSR in just a few weeks. Now, Hopkins said, the Russians and the Americans, together with the other Allies, had smashed Hitler's Reich.

Stalin listened to all of this with complaisance.

Satisfied that he had made enough compliments and said enough kind words, Hopkins moved on to the existing situation. He began by saying that in the past two months a number of new trends had appeared which gravely concerned all Americans who believed in Roosevelt's policies. This was why he, Hopkins, had risen from his sickbed to fly to Moscow at Truman's request.

The reason Truman had sent him, Hopkins continued, was precisely the alarm and concern many Americans were feeling over these recent trends in relations with the Soviet Union. The concrete cause of the change, he said, would be hard to isolate, but the heart of the matter was that Truman was having difficulty in continuing Roosevelt's policy of cooperation with the Soviet Union. Hopkins, though, attributed this not to Truman's views but to a "deterioration in popular support" resulting from "our inability to solve the Polish question".¹ Unless the Polish matter was cleared up quickly, Hopkins said, the situation would get still worse.

¹ Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, p. 464.

Stalin remarked that responsibility for this failure lay with the British Conservatives. All that the Soviet Union was demanding was a friendly Poland; the British, however, were trying to restore the pre-war *cordon sanitaire*.

Hopkins answered that neither the government nor the people of the United States had any such intentions, and Stalin repeated that he was speaking only of Britain, whose Conservative leaders did not want to see Poland friendly to the Soviet Union. Hopkins in turn assured Stalin that the United States did not object to Russia's having friendly nations along its borders, but on the contrary, desired this.

"If that is so, it will be easy for us to come to terms," Stalin said.

The talks in the Kremlin continued from May 26 to June 6, with most of the time being devoted to the Polish question. The prevailing atmosphere was on the whole favourable, and the two sides set forth frank views on a wide range of questions. The Soviet Union also lodged serious complaints against its Western Allies.

During the second meeting, on May 27, Stalin raised the question of Argentine representation at the conference in San Francisco. The Big Three, he said, had agreed in Yalta that only governments which had declared war on Germany before March 1 would be invited to San Francisco. Nonetheless Argentina, which had declared war only on March 27, was represented at the conference. What was the value of agreements among the main powers, Stalin asked, if they could be cast aside so lightly?

Hopkins tried to explain what had happened. Stettinius, he said, in accordance with the agreement reached in Yalta, had asked the Latin American delegations in San Francisco to support the admission of the Ukraine and Byelorussia to the United Nations Organisation. They had agreed, and had kept their word. Ambassadors from the Latin American countries, however, sought to get America's support for Argentina's admission in return for their voting in favour of the Soviet republics. Stettinius tried to persuade them that the Argentine question should be deferred, but without success. In the end there was nothing he could do but join his vote to those of the Latin Americans.

"What has been done cannot be put right," Stalin said. "One way or the other, the Argentine question is behind us now."

Stalin then turned to the make-up of the reparations commission. The agreement reached in Yalta had called for a three-power body, but now the United States was insisting that France be included as a fourth member. France, Stalin remarked, had been defeated. If France was to be a member, then why not Poland and Yugoslavia, which had fought bravely and suffered far more at German hands? Hopkins answered that the inclusion of France seemed to him a logical step, inasmuch as France would be one of the four occupying powers, but if the Soviet Union objected he thought the United States would not insist on French participation.

Stalin also expressed concern over the suspension of Lend-Lease deliveries. The manner in which it had all been done, he said, was crude and awkward. If the decision had been made in the hopes of bringing pressure to bear on Russia, this was a fundamental error. Although Truman's order had later been reversed, it had greatly perturbed the Soviet government. He said he must tell Hopkins frankly that if the Russians were treated in an honest and friendly way there was much that could be done, but any attempt to push them around would lead to just the opposite result.

Hopkins sought to justify the actions of the US government by speaking of a "technical misunderstanding" by one agency, which did not at all represent a political decision.

Stalin remarked in a more conciliatory tone that when the war ended in Europe the United States would no doubt have to review its Lend-Lease programme. He agreed that throughout the history of Lend-Lease the United States had kept its promises, and said he fully understood the USA's right to limit its Lend-Lease shipments to the Soviet Union under the present conditions, since the obligations the Americans had undertaken were completely voluntary. The problem was in the way it had all been done: an attempt had been made to destroy, in an unworthy and abrupt manner, an agreement existing between the two governments. Had the Soviet government been informed in advance, there would have been no bad impression.

Hopkins answered that what troubled him most about Stalin's remarks was that Moscow, it seemed, could believe that the United States was prepared to use Lend-Lease to express displeasure with the Soviet Union. He said that however unfavourable an

impression the incident had made, the Soviet government should not regard it as indicating that the USA was trying to apply pressure, or even wanted to.

Stalin then brought up the matter of the German war and merchant vessels, and said that a third of the tonnage captured by the Western Allies should be handed over to the USSR. "It would be unpleasant," he warned, "if the United States and Great Britain were now to reject this Soviet claim."

Hopkins said the United States had no objection to handing over the captured German vessels, and added that he thought the matter could be finally settled at the upcoming meeting of Truman, Stalin, and Churchill.

Poland continued to be the most vexing question. Stalin himself raised the issue at one of the later talks and said he could not understand the American position. At the conference in Yalta, Roosevelt and Churchill had agreed that the Polish government should be formed on the basis of the existing regime.

When Hopkins referred to American public opinion, Stalin answered sharply: "I would not advise you to hide behind public opinion. I am speaking of a feeling that has arisen in the Soviet government. That feeling is that as soon as the war ended the Americans started to act as if they did not need the Soviet Union any more."

The discussion of the Polish question continued right up to the last meeting, on June 6. Hopkins stressed again and again that Poland was important primarily "as a symbol of our ability to work out problems with the Soviet Union".¹ Hopkins denied any special American interest in Poland, but nonetheless continued to press the Soviet government on this issue. At a dinner given in the Kremlin on June 1 in honour of the American guests, Harriman said Stalin must believe him when he said that the whole relationship between the two countries was threatened by the deadlock over the Polish question.

There was no way, however, that the Soviet side could yield to Washington's demands, since this would have meant, in practice, the restoration of a reactionary Polish regime hostile to the Soviet Union. The dangerous consequences such a concession

¹ Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, p. 467.

would have for peace in Europe, the security of the USSR, and the national interests of the Polish people themselves were plain to see. At the same time, the Soviet side made every effort to demonstrate that it desired continued cooperation with the United States. This was apparent even in personal gestures.

During the screening of newsreels that Stalin arranged for his guests after dinner on June 1, Harriman expressed admiration of the horse on which General Antonov had reviewed the May Day parade. When he learned that Harriman was a skilled horseman, Stalin said he would make a present to the ambassador of two Russian horses. At first Harriman took this for a joke, but two days later a cavalry general appeared at his residence with a folder handsomely bound in red morocco, containing the pedigrees of two fine horses and photographs of them. Now Harriman and his daughter Kathleen, who lived with him in Moscow, were faced with a new worry: where to keep the horses. But a highly satisfactory arrangement was arrived at. The horses were stabled at Moscow's cavalry school, and both the ambassador and his daughter were able to ride them at any time they liked. When Harriman left Moscow the horses were sent to the United States by ship; they lived out their lives on the Harriman estate outside New York.

Late on the night of June 6, Harry Hopkins said farewell to Stalin and other Soviet leaders; the next morning he flew from Moscow to Berlin. There he was the guest of Marshal Zhukov, who organised a tour of the bombed-out city for him. During the breakfast given afterwards the upcoming Big Three meeting was discussed.

On the whole, Hopkins's visit to Moscow could well have been the point of departure for restoring friendly relations between the two powers. This was declared more than once by the Soviet side, and Hopkins himself, looking back on his talks in the Kremlin, concluded that the further positive development of Soviet-American relations was quite possible, even if certain complications were inevitable. He did not at all foresee a cold war. Rather, he maintained that despite all the difficulties, the USA and the USSR must find a road to cooperation acceptable to both sides. On his return to Washington Hopkins discovered that the press was taking a very positive view of the results of his trip, saying that the talks he had conducted in Moscow marked the beginning

of a new era of mutual understanding and cooperation with the Soviet Union.

On the day after his return, Hopkins had breakfast with President Truman. He described his conversations in Moscow in detail, trying to give the President as much information as possible about Stalin's personality and way of carrying on a discussion. Hopkins thought this would be of service to Truman at the conference in Potsdam and in all his later contacts with the Soviet leader.

The press was predicting that Hopkins, after his notably successful mission, would receive a high post in the administration or even become personal adviser to Truman, as he had been to Roosevelt. But the situation was changing rapidly and fundamentally. In the two months since Roosevelt's death, people of a completely different sort had appeared in the new administration. Hopkins's services were not wanted. He had done his job—had gone to Moscow in an attempt to give the impression that Washington still meant to follow Roosevelt's course. This had relieved the new master of the White House of undue pressure from American and world public opinion, which favoured continued cooperation, and given him a free hand to take a "tough" line towards the Soviet Union. Truman did ask Hopkins to take part in the Potsdam Conference, but the invitation was declined. After Truman's appointment of James Byrnes as Secretary of State in place of Stettinius, Hopkins understood that it would be better for him to leave government service altogether.

A little more than half a year later, on January 19, 1946, Harry Hopkins died in the hospital where he had spent the last months of his life.

Final Preparations

This time there were no disagreements on the date and site for a new meeting of the three heads of government. All were agreed on mid-July, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Berlin. After great trials, the members of the anti-Hitler coalition had at last achieved victory over their common enemy, and their decision to come together in the capital of the defeated Reich was, in addition to everything else, highly symbolic.

The Soviet command concluded that the most appropriate place for the Big Three meeting would be Potsdam, a once fashionable suburb of the German capital. Many of the buildings there remained in relatively good condition, including the Cecilienhof Palace, which had been built for the crown prince by the Kaiser in the years of the First World War. The palace was surrounded by a large park and enclosed by a stone wall, and thus was well suited for a meeting of the three heads of government from the point of view of security. Nearby, in Babelsberg, many of the villas formerly belonging to the German élite had survived; these were put at the disposal of heads of delegation and the personnel of the participating countries. The suggestion that the meeting be held in Potsdam was accepted without any particular discussion, and the Soviet command began at once to prepare and equip the buildings set aside for working sessions and accommodations. The conference was to begin on July 17, and although there was but little time left, the Soviet command managed not only to complete all necessary preparations but also to make improvements in the surrounding territory.

Meanwhile, final preparations for the Big Three meeting were also underway on the political level. In some ways—at least as far as Churchill was concerned—these were of a most peculiar character.

All during May and June of 1945, Churchill had urged Truman to move up the date for the new Big Three conference. Time, he argued, was on Stalin's side, since large contingents of the American army were being withdrawn from Europe and redeployed for the final attack on Japan. The Prime Minister also tried to persuade Truman not to give back the German territory that the Americans had seized on the other side of the line marked out for the Soviet zone of occupation.

Taking up the fabrications that Goebbels's propaganda machine had circulated in the last days of the Reich, Churchill wrote Truman that withdrawal of the US army from these territories would mean "the tide of Russian domination sweeping forward 120 miles on a front of 300 or 400 miles".¹ He main-

¹ *Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers. The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference), 1945*, Vol. 1, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1960, pp. 6, 7.

tained that Allied forces should not be pulled back "until we are satisfied about Poland and also about the temporary character of the Russian occupation of Germany".¹

In Washington a battle was still being waged over the political heritage of Roosevelt. Some influential figures were trying to convince the new President of the need to take an intermediate position between Britain and the Soviet Union. Given these circumstances, Truman was unable to follow Churchill, and answered that he would like to avoid making it possible for the Russians to accuse London and Washington of conspiring against Moscow. In the end Churchill was forced to agree to this, although he continued to express concern over the withdrawal of American troops from Europe. On May 12 he sent yet another message to Truman, in which for the first time he availed himself of Goebbels's idea about an "iron curtain" running through the centre of Europe.

"What will be the position in a year or two," Churchill wondered, "when the British and American armies have melted and the French has not yet been formed on any major scale, when we may have a handful of divisions, mostly French, and when Russia may choose to keep two or three hundred on active service? An iron curtain is drawn down upon their front. We do not know what is going on behind. There seems little doubt that the whole of the regions east of the line Lübeck-Trieste-Corfu will soon be completely in their hands. To this must be added the further enormous area conquered by the American armies between Eisenach and the Elbe, which will, I suppose, in a few weeks be occupied, when the Americans retreat, by the Russian power. . . It would be open to the Russians in a very short time to advance if they chose to the waters of the North Sea and the Atlantic."²

In Washington, however, the departments of State and War alike objected to using the territories held by American troops and designated for Soviet occupation as a bargaining tool. Hopkins strongly advised the President to show restraint and warned that a refusal by the USA to withdraw its forces from their advanced positions would look like a violation of the agreement

¹ *Ibid.*

² Winston S. Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, pp. 489, 490.

freely reached by all sides half a year back, and would not find favour either in Russia or in the United States itself. Following these recommendations, Truman wrote Churchill on June 11 that he could not postpone the withdrawal of American forces from the Soviet zone in order to use them as a lever in settling other problems.

Meanwhile the Soviet side made it clear that agreement would not be given for the Allied Control Commission to begin functioning in Berlin until American and British forces had been pulled back from the Soviet zone.

While Truman crossed the Atlantic on the cruiser *Augusta* en route to the conference, he plunged into a study of the problems to be discussed in Potsdam. Each day in the wardroom the President held a conference of his closest advisers, including James Byrnes, his new Secretary of State; Benjamin Cohen, a State Department counselor; Freeman Matthews, head of the State Department's European division; Admiral Leahy; and Charles Bohlen, who at that time was considered the best-informed expert on Soviet affairs.

Among the questions the American delegation discussed just before the Potsdam conference, the problem of the USSR's participation in the war against Japan occupied a special place. The Combined Chiefs of Staff presented a written report to Truman and Churchill, listing the steps that should be undertaken for the earliest possible defeat of Japan. The document said that any aid that would heighten Russia's fighting capacity should be given. The President had no doubts about the soundness of this advice. "Of course my immediate purpose was to get the Russians into the war against Japan as soon as possible," he later wrote in his memoirs.¹ Secretary of War Stimson was of the same opinion.

By the time the Potsdam Conference opened, many Americans who formerly held influential positions had been dismissed. The role played by Averell Harriman was also a very modest one. Although he was present at all the plenary sessions, he was not party to the chief decisions made within the American delegation. James Byrnes, the new Secretary of State, kept not only Harriman but even Secretary of War Stimson out of the councils

¹ Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. 1, Doubleday and Co., New York, 1955, pp. 322-23.

of power, evidently because the latter had reacted negatively to attempts to steer United States policy away from cooperation with the Soviet Union. Harriman, sensing that he was not wanted, told Truman he would like to retire soon.

"I'm ready to stay in Moscow, if you want me to, until the Japanese war is over," he told the President. "Then I want to get out and go home."¹

The President did not object, and Harriman saw this as evidence that the new administration was not very desirous of his services.

It should be said that peculiar relationships existed between Truman and Byrnes. The new Secretary of State found it quite impossible to forgive Truman for his, Byrnes's, not being President. When the Democratic National Convention opened in Chicago in 1944, Byrnes was completely confident that Truman would nominate him as Vice-President. As things turned out, however, Truman himself got the job, and Byrnes was never really reconciled to Truman's having "fooled" him. Byrnes had a high opinion of himself, and indeed was regarded by others too as an experienced politician. He had first been elected to the Senate in 1930, and gained considerable power there. It is said that Roosevelt always won his battles in Congress when Byrnes supported him, and always lost when the senator took the other side. But Byrnes had no experience whatever in international affairs, and had only a vague idea of what was going on abroad.

Formally, Truman's military adviser at the Potsdam Conference was Admiral Leahy, who had long served as one of Roosevelt's closest aides. But Truman seldom consulted him on practical affairs. Leahy's book, *I Was There*, is mostly occupied with matters of protocol, and it appears that the admiral did not see very deeply into what was taking place around him. Leahy remained faithful to the new President, even if he was practically of no use as an adviser.

The new administration had already started its reorganisation in Washington, and Truman excluded from the Potsdam Conference many political figures who in the past had actively assisted Roosevelt. This was an important indicator of the fundamental changes in the course of US foreign policy.

¹ Harriman and Abel, *Op. cit.*, p. 488.

"The Big Three" in Berlin

The American and British delegations arrived in Berlin before the Soviet delegation, and Truman, yielding to Churchill, agreed to exchange opinions with him before meeting with Stalin.

Churchill had seen Truman only once before, during his visit to Washington for talks with President Roosevelt. Thus the Prime Minister was not quite sure how he should deal with the new President. Evidently Truman had similar feelings. At any rate, while preparations for the Potsdam Conference were still underway he sent Ambassador Davies to London to get the lie of the land. At his first meeting with Churchill, Davies spoke of the President's "concern" over the serious deterioration in US and British relations with the Soviet Union. It may be supposed that Davies, who was always a firm supporter of Roosevelt's policy of rapprochement with the USSR, took Truman's expression of "concern" for the real thing. Thus he told Churchill that without continued unity among the Big Three he saw no reasonable prospects for peace. He pointed out the mistrust and suspicions of all sorts that had arisen since the victory in Europe, and said the situation was being further complicated by the Soviet view that Britain and the United States were trying to "gang up" on the USSR. In view of all this, he continued, and of the new President's never having met Stalin previously, Truman would like to have an opportunity to talk to the head of the Soviet government before the planned Big Three meeting.

Churchill, who had long since set a course for confrontation with the Soviet Union, had a different understanding of the President's "concern". He regarded it rather as a hint that the policy of confrontation could be pursued further as relations with the USSR deteriorated. But he sensed a danger in Truman's desire to meet separately with Stalin. It smacked of an attempt to exclude London from "big politics", or at least to force the British into a secondary position. Striking an indignant pose, Churchill said he was "surprised and hurt" at this desire to leave him out of the first meeting with Stalin since victory had been won.

Had he not supported the United States throughout the war? Was this to be his reward? Had he not supported the American formula of unconditional surrender, when he could have made

a separate peace with Hitler? What was the meaning of this? Such a meeting had the look of a shady deal. He would never, never agree to it.

It seemed to Churchill that the Americans did not intend to take him seriously. First Washington had turned down his proposal that American troops be left in the German territories which were to be occupied by the Soviet Union. Then Truman, despite the Prime Minister's urgent recommendations, had decided to withdraw a significant part of the American contingents from Europe. And now this proposal for a separate meeting between Truman and Stalin. Did Washington mean to abandon its old ally altogether? Did the United States intend to deal separately with Moscow, after all Churchill's efforts to convince the Americans that the Soviet Union presented a terrible threat to the United States? The Prime Minister asked Davies in a dramatic tone:

"Are you trying to say for the President that the United States is withdrawing from participation in European affairs?"¹

Davies declined to give a direct reply, and thereupon Churchill gave free reign to his emotions. He boasted that if the Americans did not understand the threat Russia held for Europe, Britain would stand alone. His nation was not a factor to be treated lightly in world affairs. It could still protect itself and would stand alone, as it had before.

Ambassador Davies refused to be put off by such blustering. He reminded Churchill that the Soviet Union had made an enormous contribution to the cause of victory over the common enemy, and added that old suspicions ought not to be revived. In conclusion, Davies declared that many people thought Britain, now having no rival power on the continent whose aid could be enlisted in offsetting the growing might of Russia, was bent on using the human resources and economic potential of the United States to support the classic British policy, "divide and rule".

Davies had fathomed Churchill's true motives with such penetration that the latter, for all his resourcefulness, did not know what answer to make. He only remarked that he would like to present his ideas to President Truman as soon as possible.

¹ Charles L. Mee, Jr., *Meeting at Potsdam*, Evans and Company, New York, 1975, pp. 34-36.

By all appearances, Truman found Churchill's forcefulness to his liking. He raised no further objections against a preliminary meeting with the Prime Minister before the Soviet delegation arrived in Potsdam.

The two Western leaders met on the morning of July 16 in the parlour of the villa in Babelsberg where the President was staying, and which was dubbed the Little White House. The discussion began with Japan. Churchill declared he could supply fresh British troops for the war in the Pacific, but Truman made it clear he would not need Britain's aid. Indeed, he told Churchill, despite the official Yalta agreement concerning the Soviet Union's entry into the war against Japan after the capitulation of Nazi Germany, he did not intend to "ask" the Russians to join that war. This somewhat sweetened the pill Churchill had been forced to swallow. His spirits lifted, and he launched into his favourite theme: the "threat" the Soviet Union supposedly presented to Europe and the United States alike. On the whole, Churchill was satisfied with the meeting. He noted in his diary that he was greatly impressed with Truman's firmness and ability to make decisions.

In the afternoon of that same day, Secretary of War Stimson went to Churchill's villa to inform him of the preliminary data from the atom-bomb test in New Mexico. Churchill was unable to conceal his delight. He exclaimed that here was "a speedy end to the Second World War", and added, after a little pause, "and perhaps to much else besides".¹

Later Churchill wrote in his diary:

"Up to this moment we had shaped our ideas towards an assault upon the homeland of Japan by terrific air bombing and by the invasion of very large armies. We had contemplated the desperate resistance of the Japanese fighting to the death with Samurai devotion, not only in pitched battles, but in every cave and dug-out. . . To quell the Japanese resistance man by man and conquer the country yard by yard might well require the loss of a million American lives and half that number of British. . . Now all this nightmare picture had vanished. In its place was the vision—fair and bright indeed it seemed—of the end of the whole war in one or two violent shocks. . . Moreover, we should

¹ W. Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, pp. 544, 545.

not need the Russians. . . We seemed suddenly to have become possessed of a merciful abridgment of the slaughter in the East and of a far happier prospect in Europe. I have no doubt that these thoughts were present in the minds of my American friends."¹

Stimson tried in vain to persuade Churchill of the need to inform the Soviet side in detail about the new weapon. Churchill refused to hear of it. His reaction was the same as that of Byrnes, with whom Stimson had spoken earlier.

The Potsdam Conference

Stalin's Meeting with Truman

At noon on July 17, a limousine bearing the head of the Soviet government pulled up at the entrance of the Little White House in Babelsberg. Harry Vaughan and James Vardaman, close advisers to the President, came out to greet the guests. Stalin was uniformed as Generalissimo in a white high-collar tunic with reddish-gold epaulettes. He had recently been awarded this rank in the recognition of the success and historic victories of the Red Army in the Great Patriotic War. Molotov and S. A. Golunsky, a counselor in the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs who served as interpreter, accompanied Stalin. The Soviet representatives climbed the carpeted stairs to Truman's office on the first floor, where the President, Secretary of State Byrnes, and Charles Bohlen, who acted as interpreter for the American side, awaited them.

The President's interpreter noted that Stalin was calm and cordial, and that his voice was gentle and friendly.

In the course of their conversation, Truman and Stalin discussed the agenda of the conference, to which Stalin made several additions, including the question of the Franco regime in Spain. Truman, as if not hearing the remarks made about Franco, asked at what time Stalin would find it convenient to meet for the first plenary session. Stalin answered that Molotov and Eden had agreed on five in the evening of that day, July 17. Byrnes jokingly referred to Stalin's well-known habit of working

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 545-46.

late into the night and getting up late the next morning. Stalin replied in the same tone that his habits had changed since the end of the war.

"As concerns the Franco regime," Stalin continued in a serious tone, "I would like to make my point of view clear. The Franco regime was not the result of internal development in Spain. It was forced upon Spain by Germany and Italy, and thus represents a threat to the United Nations. The Franco regime is dangerous and harmful, since various remnants of fascism are given shelter in Spain. For this reason we think it should be done away with."

Truman answered that he did not have sufficient materials on Franco, but he would certainly study the question. Truman then decided to give the conversation a less official turn.

"I came here," he said, "to establish friendly relations with you and to deal with you personally, so I could get a yes or no answer right away on different questions—especially since I'm no diplomat."

Stalin answered that frankness was a good thing, and would be helpful to the Soviet Union in dealings with the United States.

Truman said that if relations between the USA and the USSR were friendly, any differences that might arise could be settled quickly and in an atmosphere of openness.

"Of course," Stalin agreed, "there may be differences, but they must be settled."

Truman mentioned, as if casually, that he had already met with Churchill. Stalin received this with equanimity, saying only that the British position with regard to the war against Japan was not sufficiently clear. The Russians and the Americans, he continued, would fulfil their obligations, but the British seemed to think that the war was more or less over.

Truman told how the Prime Minister had offered him aid for the war in the Pacific.

"That is a rather strange idea," Stalin remarked. "It was the Germans who bombed England, after all, not the Japanese. Their own war is over, and the feelings of the British people may work against the Prime Minister. The American people helped Britain in the first stage of the war. Maybe now Churchill is thinking of helping the Americans in the war against Japan?"

"We are not in such dire straits as England was in relation to Germany," Truman said.

"As for us, we will be ready by the middle of August," Stalin said firmly.

Truman was clearly embarrassed by this remark. He was, by this time, opposed to having the Soviet Union enter the war in the Far East, since he no longer thought the USSR's help was needed. He was displeased that Stalin now spoke so definitely about America's request and his own promise to enter the war against Japan once Germany was defeated.

At the same time, Truman understood that now it was too late to change anything; the Soviet Union would enter the war no matter what he did or said. And so the President chose to remain silent.

Stalin took this opportunity to pass on to another subject. He informed Truman about the talks the Soviet Union was conducting with the nationalist government of China on questions that had been agreed upon at the Yalta Conference. Stalin said that things were not going smoothly with the Chinese, and they had now gone home for consultations.

After this conversation, Truman invited Stalin to stay for lunch. The talk at table remained general, but nonetheless Stalin and Truman had time to take a better look at one another. Truman wrote in his diary about this first meeting with Stalin:

"What I most especially noticed were his eyes, his face, and his expression. . . He looked me in the eye when he spoke. . . He seemed to be in good humor. He was extremely polite. . . I was impressed by him and talked to him straight from the shoulder."¹

The Particulars of the Situation

The third and last conference of the leaders of the three powers in the anti-Hitler coalition was different in many ways from the two preceding. The salient feature of this conference was that it took place shortly after the victorious conclusion of the European war against Nazi Germany and its satellites. This created a buoyant atmosphere which should have made it easier to resolve the questions facing the conference. At the same time, however, centrifugal forces were beginning to make themselves

¹ Harry S. Truman, *Op. cit.*, pp. 341-42.

felt, pulling the participants in different directions and hindering concerted action.

Another feature distinguishing the conference in Potsdam from those in Teheran and Yalta was its make-up. The United States was now represented by Truman, whose methods and views were considerably different from Roosevelt's. The British delegation was headed by Churchill only during the first part of the conference. On July 28, following the Conservatives' defeat in the general election, Clement Attlee, head of the victorious Labour Party, replaced Churchill. The appearance of these new Western political figures naturally had its effect on the work of the conference in Potsdam.

Unlike the two previous meetings of the Big Three, where many questions were dealt with for the first time, the Potsdam Conference already had at its disposal many important Allied decisions regarding both the further conduct of the war (the Soviet Union's entrance into the war against Japan, for example) and questions involving post-war settlement. In a number of instances, therefore, it remained for the participants in the Potsdam talks only to confirm or make more concrete the agreements already existing in principle. This proved to be no simple matter, though. The Western participants attempted to revise some of the agreements made earlier, and the resulting diplomatic clashes were at times intense. And, of course, new problems also arose that had to be discussed and settled.

Probably the most important question considered in depth was the reorganisation of Germany after the unconditional surrender. Recommendations on this undertaking had already been worked out by the European Advisory Commission created by a decision of the Moscow Foreign Ministers' Conference in 1943. But since the end of military operations in Europe a new situation had come about. The ruling groups of the Western powers were more and more attracted to Churchill's idea of using Germany's human and economic potential in a war that might sometime be fought against the Soviet Union. Thus the plans laid earlier for the complete demilitarisation and democratisation of Germany no longer suited the politicians of London and Washington. The Soviet delegation to the Potsdam Conference was forced to put up a determined struggle against tendencies of this sort. This was a struggle for European security and at

the same time for the peaceful future of Germany and the true national interests of the German people.

The Soviet Union succeeded in getting the conference to adopt joint resolutions on the denazification, democratisation, and demilitarisation of Germany as a single entity. It is well known that during the war years the USA and Britain had developed plans for dividing Germany into several—mostly agricultural—states. By doing this, Washington and London wanted at a single blow to do away with a dangerous rival and to create favourable conditions for imperialist intrigues in the heart of Europe. But these plans were never to be realised; the USSR took a negative stance toward them from the very start. Stalin declared on May 9—Victory Day—that the Soviet Union had “no intention to partition or destroy Germany”.

The Potsdam Conference confirmed the Agreement on the Political and Economic Principles to Govern the Treatment of Germany in the Initial Control Period, which set the following goals: the complete disarmament and demilitarisation of Germany; the elimination of all German industry that could be used for military production, the destruction of the National Socialist Party and its affiliates, the dissolution of all Nazi institutions, the prevention of all Nazi and militarist activity and propaganda, and preparation for the eventual reconstruction of German political life on a democratic basis. The section on economic principles clearly indicated that Germany was to be regarded as a single economic entity and that the German economy should be decentralised “for the purpose of eliminating the present excessive concentration of economic power as exemplified in particular by cartels, syndicates, trusts and other monopolistic arrangements”.¹

This agreement was later broken by the Western powers. Confronted with the impossibility of using all of Germany for their imperialistic ends, they decided, contrary to the letter and spirit of the Potsdam agreements, to turn its western part into a bridgehead for the aggressive acts they were planning against the USSR and the People's Democracies. A course was set for the remilitarisation of West Germany and its inclusion in the NATO military bloc. The working people of the country's eastern part then created their own, socialist state—the German Demo-

¹ *The Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam Conferences*, p. 323.

cratic Republic—which became a bastion of peace in Europe and of social progress in the land of Germany.

In the years since the Potsdam Conference much has been written about it, both in the USSR and in other countries. The credit should go to those Western investigators who have tried to evaluate objectively its work and the developments that followed. There have been a good number of biased treatments, too, though. In the American and British literature on the conference, the memoirs of men who had a part in the events of that time occupy a special place. Their purpose is clear: to present their own actions in as favourable a light as possible and to malign the policy of the Soviet Union by ascribing to it all sorts of disreputable motives.

The third meeting of the Big Three was of particular significance for the Soviet Union. The war brought to a triumphant conclusion less than three months earlier was one of the gravest trials ever undergone by our homeland. The fate of the world's first socialist state, and the future of world civilisation, of progress and democracy had been at stake. To win it, the Soviet people had borne the brunt of the burden and made enormous sacrifices. With the war in Europe over, the main tasks facing Soviet diplomacy were to consolidate the victory so dearly won, to guarantee the Soviet state and other freedom-loving peoples against further encroachments by the forces of reaction, and to create conditions that would ensure lasting peace.

In essence, this was the same fundamental policy which the Soviet Union had pursued throughout its history, including the years of the war. The trilateral agreements reached at summit conferences and other international meetings during the years when combined military operations were being conducted reflected the interests of all sides. Then, too, of course, the Western powers had their own ideas about concrete problems involved in the conduct of the war and also about post-war settlement. Heated arguments often arouse between the Allies in the course of the elaboration of their decisions. But while the struggle against the common enemy was still going on—and, especially, since the Soviet Union was bearing the main burden of the war against Nazi Germany—there was no alternative to arriving at positions acceptable to all participants in the talks. All this demanded considerable effort, a positive approach, a willingness to make

reasonable compromises, patience, good will, and a desire to reach agreement. Another important factor was that Roosevelt, a politician of realistic views, stood at the head of the US government during the years of the war. His outlook was far more sober than Churchill's, and this more than once helped to bring about a reasonable decision on the most vexed and crucial questions.

What was important here was not only Roosevelt's striving to understand and consider the position and interests of his negotiating partner, but also his fundamental idea that the cooperation with the Soviet Union which had taken shape during the war ought to be continued afterwards. In essence, this meant giving up the policy pursued by ruling groups in the Western powers between the two world wars, which called for confrontation with the Soviet Union and, if possible, the elimination of the socialist system, which many influential politicians in Washington, London, and Paris had deemed a "mistake in history" when it appeared in October of 1917. They had even been prepared to use the services of Nazi Germany to correct this "mistake".

One of the most important political results of practical cooperation among the powers of the anti-Hitler coalition was precisely that many influential figures in the West, and particularly in the USA, demonstrated willingness to cooperate with the Soviet Union on an equal footing both during the war and after it. Churchill's readiness to take this decisive turn is a different matter, but in any case he found himself compelled to uphold the principles of this policy, and in particular the fundamental principle of unanimity among the great powers, on which the United Nations Charter is based. As for President Roosevelt, it is well known that he repeatedly expressed his determination to take this turn and thus drastically transform the relations with the USSR which had existed before the war.

Roosevelt was aware that this new approach had highly influential enemies in the United States who would not want under any circumstances to extend into peacetime the cooperation with the Soviet Union practised during the war. This was why he wished to see, without delay, practical agreements with the USSR concerning the post-war period.

Roosevelt and those who shared his opinions undoubtedly showed foresight in the considerable efforts they made, while the

war was still going on, to conduct a series of conferences among the Allies at various levels and thus lay the groundwork for political and economic cooperation in peacetime. The momentum of this course, and likewise the desire of the broad masses of the American people to go on cooperating with the USSR, forced the American delegation at the Potsdam Conference to confirm the decisions the Allies had made earlier and come to agreement on a number of other questions, even though the new leadership in Washington was already turning the wheel of American policy in another direction. But momentum was not the only factor behind this, or even the main one. The positive decisions finally adopted in Potsdam were above all the result of the determined struggle waged by Soviet diplomacy and supported by the might of the USSR.

Another reason the new American leadership could not as yet venture to break with the wartime practice of cooperation was, perhaps, a certain lack of confidence: the new administration had come to power just a few months before the Potsdam Conference. Charles Bohlen, who was present as an interpreter at all the meetings of the Big Three, writes that "Potsdam was different from the two previous wartime conferences—different in tone, style, and substance".¹ He characterises the moods of the Western delegations as follows:

"While everyone was outwardly friendly, there was a certain reserve on both sides that symbolized basic distrust. . . In addition to the President, the American team had other important changes. . . From the President on down, the American delegation was feeling its way. . . Truman's personal goals at Potsdam were quite simple. He wanted to prove to Stalin that he was his own man, a real leader, in firm command of the United States government. . .

"Churchill, the old war horse, had turned nearly 180 degrees in his attitude toward the Soviet Union. . . Like British leaders before him, he wanted no other power to dominate Europe. . . So strong were Churchill's fears that he was ready . . . to walk out of the proceedings if the Soviets did not agree to a more eastward boundary between Poland and Germany."²

It may be recalled that at the Teheran and Yalta conferences,

¹ Charles E. Bohlen, *Op. cit.*, pp. 27-29.

² *Ibid.*

where the Americans and British had raised the question of partitioning Germany, Washington and London had agreed that Poland's western boundaries should be changed to take in territories that had formerly belonged to Germany. Among the other reasons this position was adopted was that at the time influential groups in Britain and the USA were still hoping to create a bourgeois Poland that would serve as a "barrier against Communism". By the time of the Potsdam Conference, however, American and British politicians had come to see that developments were tending towards the rise of a people's democratic Poland friendly to the Soviet Union. Hence their change in position: if Poland was lost, they now hoped that Germany might become a bastion of reaction and a weapon that the forces of imperialism could use to their own ends.

To make this picture more complete, we may cite the account of another American diplomat, Robert Murphy, who was very close to the new President and took an active part in shaping his policies. Murphy writes that although Truman "had publicly undertaken to honor all of FDR's commitments", he never felt "responsible for the Grand Design . . . the task of following through with the Russians".¹

Thus another feature distinguishing the Potsdam conference is that although in theory it might well have crowned a whole series of military conferences and signified the triumph of the policy of cooperation among the powers in the anti-Hitler coalition, in fact this possibility had vanished even before the first session. Two of the three participants—the delegations of the USA and Great Britain—came to Berlin with diametrically opposite aims. They had already made up their minds to bury the very idea of cooperating with the Soviet Union, and headed down the road to confrontation. Setting aside the plans made under Roosevelt, they were returning to their pre-war course of trying to isolate the USSR and to exclude it from decisions on world affairs. Their concern was to achieve a "position of strength" from which they could dictate their will to the Soviet Union.

Even at this time, the messianic conception of American world leadership was being cooked up somewhere in the depths of

¹ Robert Daniel Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, Doubleday, New York, 1964, p. 301.

Washington's policy kitchen. Soon after he took office, Truman declared with his characteristic crude forthrightness and swagger "that the Russians would soon be put in their places; and that the United States would then take the lead in running the world in the way that the world ought to be run".¹ These dreams were fostered by the atomic bomb, work on which was nearing completion. In April of 1945, Byrnes had informed Truman that this weapon "might be so powerful as to be potentially capable of wiping out entire cities and killing people on an unprecedented scale". He added that he believed the bomb would make it quite possible "to dictate our own terms at the end of the war".²

It was becoming more and more apparent that the politicians in Washington had set their course for confrontation—and under certain conditions for war—with the Soviet Union. On May 18, Assistant Secretary of State Joseph C. Grew remarked in private that "a future war with Soviet Russia is . . . certain";³ and therefore American policy towards the USSR "should immediately stiffen, all along the line". He said that war might come "within a very few years",⁴ and thus the USA would do well to keep up its fighting strength.

At this stage, however, the Truman administration could not yet venture to openly proclaim its new course, and thus it took part in the Potsdam Conference. The reasons for this were, first, that an open break with the USSR would at that time have been too great a shock to world opinion, and, second, that this sudden shift in US policy would have met with strong resistance within the country. Byrnes wrote that at the time of the war's end "the hopes of our people were high and there would have been great disappointment, if not resentment, had we not tried to work with the Russians".⁵ To a significant extent, however, such attempts were made for appearances' sake only.

There were disagreements about the line foreign policy should

¹ William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, The World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, 1959, p. 168.

² Harry S. Truman, *Op. cit.*, p. 87.

³ Joseph C. Grew, *Turbulent Era. A Diplomatic Record of Forty Years. 1904-1945*, Vol. II, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1952, p. 1446.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ James F. Byrnes, *All In One Lifetime*, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1958, p. 389.

take in the future even within the US government. Many of the cabinet members appointed by Roosevelt doubted the correctness of the anti-Soviet course.

Charles Mee's *Meeting at Potsdam*, published in the USA in 1975, gives many details about the course of the conference. Although in a number of instances the book gives a highly objective presentation of the problems discussed in Potsdam, the author tries to make it seem that none of the participants was willing to continue with the sort of relations that had taken shape during the war. While this may be true in regard to the Western leaders, it is completely at odds with the position of the Soviet side. The Soviet delegation came to Potsdam ready to make a positive contribution to the work of the conference. The Soviet Union unfailingly strove to carry further the cooperation with the Western powers which had been fruitfully practised in war-time. In his appearance on American television in June of 1973, Leonid Brezhnev declared: "It was to be expected that the war-time alliance would launch a new era of broad peaceful cooperation between the Soviet Union and the United States. I can say with confidence that our country strove for that—we wanted to consolidate and develop the good relations for which the foundation had been laid during the war."

As everyone knows, however, it takes the desire of at least two partners to reach agreement, but the will of only one side to make a quarrel. Moreover, anyone who takes the road towards confrontation and war needs to arm himself accordingly. Truman and those around him were placing their hopes in the atomic weapon. As he travelled to Potsdam, the President waited impatiently for the results of the first test, and the cruiser *Augusta*, which took him across the Atlantic, regularly received coded messages on the progress of the preparations being made in New Mexico.

The First Day

At around five o'clock in the afternoon of July 17, the quiet, shady park of the Cecilienhof Palace resounded with the roar of engines and the squeal of brakes: participants were arriving for the first plenary session of the Potsdam Conference. The British were the first to arrive. Churchill, accompanied by plain-

clothes men, stepped out of his car and headed for the apartments set aside for the British delegation's working quarters. A few minutes later Truman arrived to the accompaniment of wailing sirens. First a motorcycle escort appeared on the pebble-strewn path, then an armoured jeep, and, finally, the President's car, with plain-clothes men on the running boards. An armoured carrier loaded with armed men brought up the rear. All of them leapt out in front of the palace with their pistols and submachine-guns at the ready. They formed a living corridor along which Truman and Byrnes, smiling broadly, walked towards the palace. Then the cars with the Soviet delegation arrived. Stalin still wore his white tunic and Generalissimo's epaulettes. Everyone gathered around a large round table covered with a cream-coloured cloth, with the flags of the three powers at its centre.

The heads of the delegations and their closest advisers sat just around the table, the former in arm-chairs, the latter in ordinary chairs. The other members of the delegations and the experts took places behind them. Beside Stalin sat Molotov, Vyshinsky, Gromyko, and Pavlov, his interpreter; beside Truman—Byrnes, Leahy, Davies, and Bohlen, his interpreter; beside Churchill—Eden, Cadogan, Attlee, and Birse, his interpreter. Attlee had been invited by Churchill as an observer; as the leader of the Labour Party, he would become head of the British government and hence of the delegation if the Conservatives were defeated in the upcoming Parliamentary elections—as in fact happened.

Photo-correspondents were allowed ten minutes to record this historic occasion. When they had left, Churchill asked:

"Who is to be chairman of our Conference?"

"I propose President Truman," said Stalin.

"The British delegation supports this proposal," Churchill hastened to concur.

Truman was clearly flattered, but his outward reaction was restrained, even dry. He said only that he accepted the chairmanship.

The first session began with a discussion of the agenda. After the preliminary exchange of opinions. Truman, already experiencing awkwardness at not having reacted with more emotion to his election as chairman, decided to correct his slip.

"Because I was unexpectedly elected Chairman of this Confer-

ence," he said, "I was unable to express my feelings at once. I am very glad to meet you, Generalissimo, and you, Mr. Prime Minister. I am well aware that I am now substituting for a man whom it is impossible to substitute, the late President Roosevelt. I am glad to serve, even if partially, the memory which you preserve of President Roosevelt. I want to consolidate the friendship which existed between you."

Then Churchill, on behalf of the British delegation, thanked Truman for accepting the chairmanship and paid tribute to President Roosevelt's memory. Stalin added briefly that the feelings Churchill had expressed were fully shared by the Soviet delegation.

Returning to the agenda, Truman suggested that consideration be given to setting up a Council of Foreign Ministers for preparing a peace conference. He went on to say it was necessary to discuss and confirm the principles that were to guide the Control Council for Germany. Turning to the question of the obligations undertaken by the Allied powers at the Yalta Conference, the President observed that many of these obligations remained to be fulfilled, in particular those that were set forth in the Declaration on Liberated Europe. He suggested that the conference consider this question, and also that of Italy's admission to the United Nations Organisation. In conclusion Truman said:

"The matters which I have put before you are, of course, highly important. But this does not exclude the placing of additional questions on the agenda."

"I think," Churchill said, "we should now . . . elaborate some kind of programme for our work to see whether we are able to cope with this agenda ourselves, or whether we should refer a part of the items to the Foreign Ministers. I do not think we should lay down the whole of the agenda at once, but can confine ourselves to an agenda for each day. For instance, we should like to add the Polish question."

Stalin expressed doubts about the procedure Churchill was suggesting.

"Still," he said, "it would be well for all the three delegations to set forth all the questions they consider necessary to put on the agenda. The Russians have questions on the division of the German navy and others. . .

"The second question is that of reparations.

"Then we should discuss the question of trust territories."

Right away Churchill was on the alert.

"Do you mean the territories in Europe," he asked, "or all over the world?"

Stalin declined to make a direct answer. He said he did not know yet just what the territories were, but added that "the Russians would like to take part in the administration of trust territories". Stalin then continued with his views concerning the agenda, saying that the question of restoring diplomatic relations with Germany's former satellites ought to be discussed. There was also a need to talk about the regime in Spain, and problems involving Tangiers, Syria, and the Lebanon might also be discussed. As for the Polish question, Stalin said he thought it should be considered with an eye to solving the questions arising from the establishment of the Government of National Unity in Poland and the consequent need to dissolve the émigré government in London.

These suggestions met with no objections. The participants agreed that the three ministers of foreign affairs should meet regularly to select specific questions from the agenda to be discussed by the heads of government at the following plenary session.

During the discussion of the functions of the Council of Foreign Ministers, Stalin asked:

"Will it be a Council preparing questions for the future international peace conference?"

"Yes," Truman replied.

"The peace conference which will end the war," Churchill intoned.

"In Europe the war is over," Stalin pointed out. "The Council will determine and suggest the date for the convocation of a peace conference."

Truman did not want a peace conference at all, but was unwilling to reveal this at the time—hence his unwavering "Yes" to Stalin's question. Probably the only thing that slightly betrayed his position was that he made a point of saying that "the conference should not be called before we are duly prepared for it".

At Truman's suggestion, the participants agreed to begin their plenary sessions at four in the afternoon rather than five.

"If that is accepted, let us postpone the examination of questions until 4:00 p.m. tomorrow," Truman said.

But before the session came to an end there was an interesting exchange which it seems important to give as recorded in the minutes:

Stalin: There is only one other question: why does Mr. Churchill deny the Russians their share of the German navy?

Churchill: I have no objections. But since you have asked me this question, here is my answer: this navy should be either sunk or divided.

Stalin: Do you want it sunk or divided?

Churchill: All means of war are terrible things.

Stalin: The navy should be divided. If Mr. Churchill prefers to sink the navy, he is free to sink his share of it; I have no intention of sinking mine.

Churchill: At present, nearly the whole of the German navy is in our hands.

Stalin: That's the whole point. That's the whole point. That is why we need to decide the question.

The Soviet government had already had one unpleasant experience with the Italian vessels captured by the Western powers, and thus naturally thought it needful to show insistence in regard to the German navy.

The Dilemma over the Atomic Bomb

At 1:15 in the afternoon of July 18 Truman arrived at Churchill's villa. The Prime Minister had invited him to lunch. Truman brought with him a telegram just arrived from Washington about the results of the atomic bomb test in New Mexico. After he had acquainted Churchill with its contents, the President raised the question of how the news should be conveyed to Stalin. Truman, of course, did not have it in mind—as Stimson did—to show good will towards the Russians. He was thinking of something else: how to avert accusations of having shown bad will.

Truman feared that to tell the Soviet representatives the details about the test would only hasten their entry into the war against Japan, which he would have preferred to avoid altogether. Both the Western leaders thought that since there was no more

need for Russian aid in the Far East it would be best not to tell the Russians anything at all. This might have undesirable consequences later, though. Of course it would be a good idea, the two men agreed, to wait until fuller data on the test arrived from Washington. But the central question remained: How, and just what, to tell Stalin. To inform him in writing would seem too official, and would attract too much attention to the news. If Stalin were told at some special session, on the other hand, he might take a more serious attitude towards the potential of the new weapon than the Western leaders wanted, and speed up the transfer of Soviet troops to the Far East. Both Truman and Churchill were in fact cherishing the hope that with the help of the atomic bomb the war against Japan could be concluded before the Soviet Union had entered it.

After weighing the different options it was decided that the best thing would be to tell Stalin about the bomb casually, as if in passing, at a time when he was occupied with his own thoughts.

Truman summed up:

"I think I had best just tell him after one of our meetings that we have an entirely novel form of bomb, something quite out of the ordinary (without mentioning the word atomic), which we think will have decisive effects upon the Japanese will to continue the war."¹

After a little thought, Churchill agreed.

The Western leaders were especially worried that Japan might surrender through Russian diplomatic channels before the Americans had a chance to "win" the war. Churchill told Truman about the Japanese peace feeler Stalin had described to him the preceding day.

The substance of these overtures, Churchill explained, was that "Japan could not accept 'unconditional surrender', but might be prepared to compromise on other terms".²

Truman asked why Stalin had said nothing about this to the Americans, and Churchill expressed the opinion that perhaps Stalin did not want to give the Americans the impression that he was pressuring them. The British, Churchill continued, also did not want the Americans to think Britain was reluctant to

¹ Charles L. Mee, Jr., *Op. cit.*, p. 110.

² *Ibid.*

join the war against Japan. But the enormous number of lives that the Americans, and to a lesser extent the British, would have to lose to impose unconditional surrender on Japan must not be overlooked. Thus, Churchill concluded, it might be worthwhile to think of putting things some other way, so that the Allies could get the essentials of what they sought while giving the Japanese some chance to save their military honour.

The President unhesitatingly rejected this suggestion. He feared that if the demand for unconditional surrender was modified Japan might surrender, using Moscow as an intermediary, and the victory would thus slip out of America's hands. What Truman wanted was for the Japanese, for the time being, to keep up their fierce resistance. This would justify using the atomic bomb against them and thereby demonstrate America's might to the whole world—not least to the Soviet Union. At the same time, it would be the best way for Washington to reap all the fruits of victory. As the moment when the atomic bomb was dropped on Japanese cities drew nearer, the strategy of the White House manifested itself more and more clearly: to win the war before the Soviet Union was able to enter it.

As for Churchill's remarks about Japanese military honour, they failed to make the slightest impression on Truman. He said Japan had long since lost its military honour—in the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor.

This entire conversation made an unpleasant impression on Churchill. He sensed "decisiveness and aggressiveness" in the new President; the power of the United States had grown, and already Truman began to handle things as if the world had already entered "the American century".¹

But Churchill was still hoping to get something for his country. He spoke of the "melancholy position" of Britain, which had lost more than half of its investments abroad in its singlehanded fight for the common cause. Truman said that America owed much to Great Britain. If Britain had collapsed like France, he told Churchill, America might by the time they were speaking have been fighting the Germans on its own coast. Thus relations between the USA and Britain were not to be considered from the financial point of view alone.

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 110-12.

After these consoling words, Truman turned the conversation to the air bases America had built, "at enormous cost", in British territories. America, he said, could not simply give up these bases. Some sort of fair arrangement for their joint use ought to be worked out. Churchill said he was prepared to arrive at a mutually acceptable agreement on British and American use of airfields and other bases around the world. Britain was now a lesser power than the United States, the Prime Minister continued, but still had much to give from what remained of the empire of greater days.

"Why should we not share facilities for defence all over the world?" Churchill asked. "We could add 50 per cent to the mobility of the American Fleet."¹ Just below the surface here was a hint that London might demand to use America's possessions.

Truman was put on his guard by what seemed to him an excessive willingness on Churchill's part to come to terms. He noted dryly that "any plan would have to be fitted in, in some way, with the policy of the United Nations".²

Truman was hoping that the USA would play the leading role in the United Nations and throughout the world. America's monopoly on the atomic bomb was to be a means to the attainment of this goal, and thus the President's thoughts returned again and again to New Mexico, where the first atomic bomb test was conducted.

It was only on the fourth day of the conference, July 21, that a detailed report on the experiment reached Potsdam. Here is how Truman's daughter, Margaret, described this moment in her lengthy book on her father's political career: "In the midst of this complicated wrangling [the conference—*Author*] came the detailed report on the atomic explosion at Alamogordo Air Base... Secretary of War Stimson brought it to the little White House. At his suggestion my father had invited Secretary of State Byrnes to join them. Mr. Stimson began reading the report aloud but he was so excited, he frequently stumbled over words... Secretary of War Stimson noted in his diary that my father was 'tremendously pepped up' by these details and said that it gave him 'an entirely new feeling of confidence'... This freed my

¹ W. Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, pp. 539-40.

² *Ibid.*

father to negotiate with far more boldness and bluntness. . . The stage was now set for some very hard bargaining at Potsdam.”¹

Truman was elated at the news of the successful test and of the new bomb's destructive power. Robert Murphy noted in his memoirs that “as Truman presided over the fourth day of plenary sessions, we noticed a decided change in the President's manner. He seemed much more sure of himself, more inclined to participate vigorously in the discussions, to challenge some of Stalin's statements. It was apparent that something had happened.”² This was the very day on which Truman raised objections to taking lands from eastern Germany and giving them to Poland.

Truman was impatient to let the Soviet side know about the ace he had up his sleeve. He waited till July 24 and then, after the conclusion of the day's plenary session, followed through with the plan he had arrived at earlier. Margaret Truman writes: “My father now tackled the sticky question of how and what to tell Stalin about the atomic bomb. He decided to tell him as soon as possible, but to confine his remark to a very general description. . . Dad strolled over to the Russian leader and told him that the United States had created a new weapon ‘of unusual destructive force’. Prime Minister Churchill and Secretary of State Byrnes stood only a few yards away, studying Stalin's reaction. He was remarkably cool. . . My father, Mr. Churchill, and Mr. Byrnes concluded that Stalin had failed to grasp the significance of the statement.”³

In fact, Stalin was only pretending not to have understood. Marshal Zhukov, who was also present at Potsdam, remembers: “On returning from the session, Stalin told Molotov, in my presence, about a conversation that had taken place between him and Truman.

“‘They're trying to drive their price up,’ Molotov said at once.

“Stalin laughed. ‘Let them try. I must talk to Kurchatov today about speeding up our work.’

“I understood that they were talking about the creation of the atomic bomb.”

¹ Margaret Truman, *Harry S. Truman*, Pocket Books, New York, 1974, pp. 296-97, 302.

² Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, p. 273 .

³ Margaret Truman, *Op. cit.*, pp. 300-01.

Truman was clearly at a loss about what to do next. He was disheartened that the first attempt at atomic blackmail had gone wide of the mark. The conduct of the Soviet delegation remained unchanged, as if nothing had happened. Truman still wanted to take advantage of the superiority which he thought possessing the atomic bomb gave the United States, but at the same time he did not want to reveal too much—the new weapon had yet to be used on the battlefield. Truman gave orders to his military leaders to drop the bomb on Japan as soon as possible but not, under any circumstances, before he had left Potsdam. He wanted to be far away from the Russians and their questions, on his way home, before the first bomb dropped.

Truman's attempt to make use of "atomic advantage" at Potsdam may be considered a failure.

Social Events During the Conference

In addition to the discussions conducted at the plenary sessions, the three heads of government engaged in an intensive exchange of opinions during unofficial meetings, including the two- and three-way conversations over breakfasts and lunches. In this more informal atmosphere many questions were gone over in a preliminary way.

An interesting example is the conversation, described above, that took place between Truman and Churchill over lunch on July 18. From the Prime Minister's residence, the President went straight to the villa where Stalin was staying.

Truman had decided to pay a short visit in return for Stalin's call at the Little White House on the previous day. The President was accompanied by Secretary of State Byrnes. They found Stalin with Molotov. After greetings were exchanged, Stalin said he had some news for the President. He handed Truman a copy of the message from the Japanese Emperor that the Soviet government had received through the Japanese ambassador in Moscow. Truman pretended to read it, but he already knew about the message from his recent talk with Churchill. Stalin had made no mention of it at their previous meeting, and Truman may have wondered why he was being informed now. Perhaps Stalin wanted to find out how much Churchill had told the President, and whether the Prime Minister had tried to

convince him that it would be wise to change the formula calling for Japan's unconditional surrender. Some American historians maintain that the Soviet side already had some knowledge about the atomic bomb test in New Mexico, and theorise that Stalin decided to tell Truman about the Japanese appeal at this point in the hope of gathering further confidential information. But the President, as we have seen, felt that the time was not yet ripe to reveal his secret.

Stalin asked if any answer should be given to the message. Truman did not reply directly, but said that he doubted the good will of the Japanese.

"It might be expedient," Stalin said, "to put the Japanese off their guard by giving them the most general and indefinite answer possible, saying only that the character of what they are suggesting is not sufficiently clear."

Truman said nothing. He was evidently thinking over the situation.

"There are other alternatives as well," Stalin continued. "The message could be ignored completely, left without any answer at all. Or, finally, a definite refusal could be sent."

Truman said that the first suggestion seemed preferable to him.

"Certainly," Molotov remarked, "that would be correct, in fact. After all, it isn't at all clear what the Japanese have in mind."

And so it was decided. Truman rose and began to say his good-byes. The daily plenary session was soon to begin.

In the evening of that same day, July 18, Stalin invited Churchill for a late supper. Churchill arrived at Stalin's villa at 8:30 and remained until 1:30 in the morning. The Prime Minister was accompanied only by Major Birse, his interpreter.

Later on Churchill was to describe this meeting in detail. He noted in his diary that Stalin was in very good spirits. The British visitor brought with him a box of the big Burmese cigars of which he himself was so fond. In accepting the present, Stalin said that he was smoking far less than before, and sometimes just sucked on empty pipe out of habit. That little crooked pipe, like Churchill's enormous Burmese cigars, became widely known and even acquired a certain symbolic significance.

Many years later, in 1968, I had occasion to visit the Shan

State—a remote mountainous province in the north of Burma. We made a long journey by motorboat across a splendid mountain lake, and towards noon arrived at a little island where a picturesque and exotic bazaar was humming that Sunday. Everything imaginable was offered for sale to the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages scattered along the shores of the lake. As I passed among the gaudy rows of vendors, I caught sight of some big cigars laid out on a mat. A sign written in English and the local language advertised them as “Churchill’s cigars”. And just beside them crooked brown pipes in cardboard boxes were offered to buyers as “Stalin’s pipes”. It was surprising to find this curious reminder of the time of the anti-Hitler coalition, long since vanished into history, on that far-away island.

At the supper table, Stalin evidently felt a desire to say something pleasant to his guest. At that time the Prime Minister was particularly concerned over the outcome of the Parliamentary election to be held soon, and Stalin, knowing this, said he hoped Churchill would emerge the winner. He probably thought it unlikely that a military leader who had brought his country to victory would be turned out by the voters in the hour of triumph. At the Yalta Conference, when Churchill remarked half in jest that if he did anything that caused displeasure in Britain he would probably be “driven out”, Stalin replied, in the same vein, that “victors are not driven out”. Churchill, though, was well aware of the mood at home, and felt far from certain of his success. When he asked for a break in the work of the Potsdam Conference so that he and Attlee could travel together to London, where they would learn the outcome of the election, Churchill said: “We shall have to leave here on Wednesday July 25, together with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. But we shall be back by the afternoon sitting on July 27.” He paused for an instant, and then added: “Or at least some of us will.”

As for Truman, it may be supposed that he would have preferred to see Churchill win. The two of them had seen eye to eye right from the start. Margaret Truman writes, “Friendship was instant between Mr. Churchill and Dad.”¹ She also reports that Lord Moran, Churchill’s personal physician, made this notation in his diary: “Winston has fallen for the President.”²

¹ Margaret Truman, *Op. cit.*, p. 292.

² *Ibid.*

The Conservatives went down to defeat, and Clement Attlee returned to Potsdam with a new entourage. Ernest Bevin became Britain's Foreign Secretary. There was no essential difference, however, between Churchill's foreign policy line and that of the Labourite Prime Minister and the new head of the Foreign Office.

After his victory in the election Attlee had to form a new government, and thus was delayed in London for an extra day. As a result, the conference was resumed not on July 27, as had been planned, but on July 28.

All of this was still in the future, however, as Stalin and Churchill continued their conversation over a late supper. Churchill was still nursing the hope that he would be elected once again, and now he set about convincing Stalin that it would be his policy "to welcome Russia as a Great Power on the sea."¹

Churchill went on to say that he "wished to see Russian ships sailing across the oceans of the world".² He declared that up to that time "Russia had been like a giant with his nostrils pinched by the narrow exits from the Baltic and the Black Sea".³

Stalin listened calmly without interrupting.

Churchill, encouraged by Stalin's attention, continued to develop his idea. He said he would personally support an amendment to the Montreux Convention that would exclude Japan and give Russia access to the Mediterranean. He would welcome Russia's appearance on the oceans, and by this he meant not only the Dardanelles but also the Kiel Canal, which ought to have a regime like that of the Suez Canal and the warm waters of the Pacific.

There is no telling how far Churchill's imagination would have carried him if Stalin had not let the wind out of his sails with a down-to-earth question. All these promises were remote from the way things actually stood. The Soviet Union had suffered huge losses at sea, and the building of a new navy would require time and great expenditures. Churchill, who had once been head of the Admiralty, understood this perfectly. He could be liberal with promises, knowing that for the moment they were of little

¹ Ch. Mee, *Op. cit.*, pp. 117-18.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

practical significance. Moreover, the Western Allies, far from helping the USSR to establish itself as a power on the seas, were doing all they could to prevent this by delaying the transfer to the Soviet Union of its rightful share of the enemy warships they had seized. Stalin, of course, thought the moment suitable for bringing this up.

"What about the German ships?" he asked. "The Soviet Union would like its share."

Churchill stopped short. He realised at once that he had gotten carried away with his own rhetoric. He had to find some way out, avoid a direct answer. He said that some people were seriously worried about what Russia's intentions might be. All of the capitals of Eastern Europe were now in Russian hands, and it looked as if the Soviet Union was planning to move farther westward.

Stalin expressed amazement at such suppositions. He said the Soviet Union was withdrawing its forces from the west. Two million men were to be sent home and demobilised within the next four months. The Soviet Union, he continued, had suffered enormous losses and needed to bring as many soldiers as possible home to help in rebuilding what had been destroyed. After hearing this Churchill turned the conversation to other matters.

All in all Churchill did everything he could, during the few days that he headed the British delegation, to attract public attention. At one of the plenary sessions he announced that there were nearly 180 correspondents in Berlin constantly demanding information about the conference. When it was denied they became irritable and indignant. This mood, he said, might be conveyed to the public through their reporting.

"That's a whole company," Stalin remarked. "Who let them in?"

"They are not here, in the zone, of course," Churchill explained, "but in Berlin. Of course, we can work calmly only if there is secrecy, and we are duty bound to ensure this secrecy. If both my colleagues agree with me, I could, as an old journalist, have a talk with them and explain to them the need for secrecy at our meeting; I could tell them that we sympathise with them, but are unable to tell them what is going on here. I think we should stroke their wings to calm them."

Truman, who also had experience in dealing with the press, was naturally unwilling to let Churchill gather laurels and strike poses for the journalists.

"Each of our delegations has special press officers," he observed coldly, "and it is their duty to protect us from the claims of the correspondents. Let them do their job. We can authorise them to talk to the journalists."

Churchill was clearly distressed to see his suggestion rejected.

These unofficial meetings were not without their curious moments. At one of the dinners Stalin gave, violin virtuosos and two excellent pianists performed for the guests. Truman, who wanted to be the first in everything, decided he should compete in this field also. The noted American pianist Eugene List was summoned posthaste from Paris, where he was serving in his country's armed forces. Truman had given orders that List's program should include one of the Chopin vales, but no copy of the music could be found in Babelsberg. A coded message was sent to the American military command, and the music was obtained in Paris and sent to Berlin by air. By evening it was in the Little White House. Churchill, irked by all this, boasted to Admiral Leahy that he would "get even". He sent orders to London forthwith that the whole Royal Air Force Band was to be sent to Babelsberg to play at the dinner to which he had invited the Soviet and American leaders.

In the evening of July 23 Churchill played host to Stalin and Truman. Everything went along as usual until the band struck up. The guests almost had to shout to make themselves heard as British, American, and Russian marches were performed. After a while Stalin, glass in hand, strolled over to the conductor, proposed a toast in honour of the musicians, and asked them to a few quieter pieces.

At the end of the evening, Stalin took up his menu card and asked everyone to sign it. Churchill and Truman followed suit. The menu passed from hand to hand to the accompaniment of jokes and laughter, and the atmosphere became completely informal. Shortly after midnight the orchestra played the three national anthems, and the guests began to depart.

In addition to the meetings among heads of government, other conferences also took place in parallel to the plenary sessions.

The three ministers of foreign affairs had regular exchanges of opinion, and there were also meetings of military experts and groups of advisers on various problems.

Truman's Unsuccessful Attack

On July 21, General Groves's detailed report on the atomic bomb test arrived from Washington. Only now did it become clear to Truman what a formidable weapon had come into his country's possession. Secretary of War Stimson, who acquainted the President with the report, later wrote in his diary that Truman and Byrnes were overjoyed. Truman said that the news gave him an altogether new sense of confidence, and thanked Stimson for having helped him by coming to the conference.

Stimson did not realise that by intentionally reducing his function to bearing these tidings from New Mexico, Truman had in fact discharged him from the cabinet. When Stimson met the President again two days later and complained that he was being excluded from confidential talks on political questions related to the new bomb, Truman interrupted him rudely and said he could leave for home whenever he chose. After receiving the information about the atomic bomb, Truman had no further need of Stimson. Moreover, knowing that Stimson insisted the Soviet government should be told the details of the test, Truman was eager to see him quit the scene. Stimson left Potsdam for the USA on July 25, and resigned soon afterwards.

Meanwhile the question of using the bomb to intimidate the Russians in Europe was being intensively discussed in private among the top leaders of the American delegation in Potsdam. During the plenary session of July 21—the very day the report arrived from Washington—Truman tried to launch an attack against the Soviet Union, using as a pretext the question of Poland's new western border.

I cite the minutes of the conference:

"Truman: Allow me to make a statement concerning Poland's western border. The Yalta Agreement established that German territory is to be occupied by the troops of the four Powers—Great Britain, the USSR, the USA and France—each of whom is to have its zone of occupation. The question of Poland's borders was touched upon at the conference, but the decision said

the final solution of the question was to be made at a peace conference. At one of our first sittings we decided that as the starting point of a discussion of Germany's future borders we take Germany's borders as of December 1937.

"We have delineated our zones of occupation and the borders of these zones. We have withdrawn our troops to our zones as had been established. But it now appears that another Government has been given a zone of occupation and that has been done without consulting us. If the intention was to make Poland one of the Powers which is to have a zone of occupation, this should have been agreed upon beforehand. We find it hard to accept such a solution of the question because we had not been consulted about the matter in any way. I take a friendly attitude to Poland and will possibly fully agree to the Soviet Government's proposals concerning her western borders, but I do not want to do this now, because there will be another place for doing this, namely, the peace conference."

As has been pointed out already, however, Truman had firmly decided by this time that there was not to be a peace conference at all. In suggesting that the problem be tabled until the peace conference, he was putting it off till the Greek calends, as they say. At the same time he was, in essence, accusing the Soviet side of violating an agreement among the three powers by unilaterally deciding a question that had been placed within the competence of the peace conference. This was intended to make it easier for him, in turn, to abrogate the agreement on calling a peace conference. In doing so, he was hoping that the atomic bomb and America's might in general would in time make it possible for the United States to recarve the map of the world and settle international problems to suit itself, without undertaking any obligations.

But let us return to the plenary session. Truman's sortie was immediately answered by the Soviet side:

"*Stalin:* The decision of the Crimea Conference said that the Heads of the Three Governments agreed that Poland's eastern border was to run along the Curzon line, which means that Poland's eastern border was established at the conference. As for her western border, the conference decisions said that Poland was to receive substantial accretions to her territory in the north and the west. It was further stated: they, that is, the Three Govern-

ments consider that at the appropriate time the new Polish Government of National Unity will be asked for its opinion on the question of the size of these accretions and that the final decision on Poland's western borders would then be put off until the peace conference.

"Truman: That is how I understood it myself. But we did not have and do not have any right to give Poland a zone of occupation.

"Stalin: The Polish Government of National Unity has expressed its opinion on the western border. Its opinion is now known to all of us.

"Truman: No official statement has ever been made on this western border.

"Stalin: I am now speaking of the Polish Government's opinion. Now we all know what it is. We can now agree on Poland's western border, and the peace conference is to take the final formal decision on it.

"Truman: Mr. Byrnes received the Polish Government's statement only today. We have not yet had any time to study it."

The problem, however, was not in the least that the American delegation had not had time to study these proposals. Truman was hardly interested in them at all. His aim was different: to demonstrate "firmness" in regard to the Soviet Union. He was already prepared to scuttle the understanding reached earlier, and wanted to make it clear that he did not intend to consider the opinion of anyone else if it did not suit America. True, he had not yet revealed the reason for his sudden intractability, but he felt the incredible power of the new weapon behind him and was looking forward with pleasure to the moment when he could stun the Soviet representatives with the news of it.

There can be no doubt that the Soviet side took note of the President's "toughness", but it continued with imperturbable calm to explain its own point of view.

"Stalin: Our proposal boils down to expressing our opinion concerning the Polish Government's desire to have a western border running along a certain line. It makes no difference whether we express our opinion today or tomorrow.

"As for the question that we have granted the Poles an occupation zone without having the consent of the Allied Powers, it has not been stated correctly. In their notes, the American Govern-

ment and the British Government have repeatedly suggested that we should not allow the Polish administration to enter the western regions until the question of Poland's western border is finally settled. We could not do this because the German population had gone to the west in the wake of the retreating German troops. The Polish population, for its part, advanced to the west, and our army needed a local administration in its rear, on the territory which it occupied. Our army cannot simultaneously set up an administration in the rear, fight and clear the territory of the enemy. It is not used to doing this. . . .

"That was the spirit in which we replied to our American and British friends at the time. We were also inclined to do this in the knowledge that Poland was getting an accretion of land to the west of her former border. I don't see what harm there is for our common cause in letting the Poles set up their administration on a territory which is to be Polish anyway. . . ."

The President evidently sensed that he had gone too far. At any rate, he took a more conciliatory tone. At the same time, he hastened to bring up a new problem, reparations, and tried to claim that establishing Polish administration in the areas under discussion would make it difficult for Germany to pay them.

"*Truman*: I have no objections to the opinion expressed concerning Poland's future border. But we did agree that all parts of Germany must be under the control of the four Powers. And it will be very hard to agree to a just decision of the question of reparations if important parts of Germany are under an occupying Power other than one of these four Powers.

"*Stalin*: Is it for reparations that you are apprehensive? In that case, we can waive reparations from these territories.

"*Truman*: We have no intention of receiving them.

"*Stalin*: As for these western territories, there has been no decision on this, and it is a matter of interpreting the Crimea decision. There has been no decision on the western border, the question has remained open. There was only the promise of extending Poland's borders to the west and north.

"*Churchill*: I have quite a lot to say about Poland's western border line but, I understand, the time for it has not yet come."

Truman made use of Churchill's remark to refer once again to the peace conference:

"Truman: It is up to the peace conference to determine the future borders."

Stalin repeated that it would be very difficult to restore German administration in the western strip, since everyone had run away.

"Truman: If the Soviet Government wants to have help in re-establishing the German administration in these territories, this question could be discussed."

It seemed as if Truman was prepared to raise the question of returning the German population that had fled from territories which, by the agreement made earlier, were to be handed over to the Polish state. But his remark was left hanging.

"Stalin: Our concept, the Russian concept during a war, in the occupation of enemy territory, is as follows. The army fights, it goes forward and has no worries except winning the fighting. But if the army is to move on it must have a tranquil rear. It cannot fight with the enemy at the front and simultaneously in the rear. The army fights well if the rear is tranquil and if the rear sympathises with it and helps it. Consider for a moment the situation in which the German population is either on the run behind the retreating troops, or is engaged in shooting our troops in the back. Meanwhile, the Polish population follows in the wake of our troops. In such a situation the army naturally desires to have an administration in its rear which sympathises with it and helps it. That is the whole point.

"Truman: I understand this and sympathise.

"Stalin: There was no other way out. This does not mean, of course, that I lay down the borders myself. If you do not agree to the line which the Polish Government has proposed, the question will remain open. That is all.

"Churchill: But can this question be left without solution?

"Stalin: It has to be solved at some time."

The attack by the Western leaders had been repulsed, and Churchill decided to resort to a flanking movement. He raised the question of supplying the population of defeated Germany with food, which he intended to tie in once again with the problem of the western border.

"Churchill: There is also the question of supplies. The question of food supplies is a highly important one, because these areas are the chief sources of foodstuffs for the German population.

"*Stalin*: Who in that case will work there and raise the grain? There's no one to do this except the Poles.

"*Truman*: We can reach an agreement. I think the substance of the question before us, with which we are concerned, is the kind of administration that will be set up in these areas. We are also interested in whether these areas are to be part of Germany or part of Poland in the period of occupation. Here is the question. We have an occupation zone. France has an occupation zone, the British and the Soviet Union have an occupation zone each. I want to know whether the areas now being dealt with are a part of the Soviet zone of occupation. I think that at the appropriate time we shall be able to reach agreement concerning Poland's future borders, but now I am interested in the question of these areas during the occupation period.

"*Stalin*: On paper they are still German territory; actually, *de facto*, they are Polish territory.

"*Truman*: What has happened to the local population? There must have been some three million of it.

"*Stalin*: The population has gone.

"*Churchill*: If that is so, it means that they will have to obtain food in the areas to which they have gone, if the areas the Germans have abandoned are not handed over to Germany and are not at Germany's disposal. I understand that according to the Polish Government's plan, which I understand is supported by the Soviet Government, a quarter of all the cultivated land in 1937 Germany is to be taken away from her.

"As for the population, it turns out that three or four million Poles are to be moved from the east to the western areas. According to Russian data, Germany's pre-war population in these areas totalled eight and a quarter million. This means that apart from the serious hardships connected with the displacement of such a great number of people, a disproportional burden will be laid on other parts of Germany, and still the food problem will not be solved."

Once again, from another direction, Truman returned to the question of Poland's border. He seemed to be thinking aloud:

"France will want to have the Saar and the Ruhr, and if we let France have the Saar and the Ruhr, what will be left of Germany?

"*Stalin*: There is no decision on this, but in respect of Poland's

western border there is a decision, and it is that the territory of Poland must receive an accretion in the north and the west.

"Churchill: . . . We were speaking of the border and have now switched to the question of Germany's food supplies. But I only mentioned it because the border question creates some great difficulties for us in the solution of certain other questions.

"Stalin: . . . Anyhow, Germany cannot do, and has never done, without grain imports.

"Churchill: Of course, but she will be even less able to feed herself if the eastern lands are taken away from her.

"Stalin: Let them buy grain from Poland.

"Churchill: We do not consider this territory to be Polish territory.

"Stalin: The Poles live there, and they have cultivated the fields. We can't demand of the Poles that they should work the fields and let the Germans have the grain."

Again Truman decided to play on the Soviet Union's legitimate desire to receive from Germany reparations for the enormous losses and destruction caused by Nazi aggression. He adopted the posture of having accepted the transfer of the disputed area to the Polish administration, but at the same time put into doubt the very possibility that reparations could be made.

"Truman: It seems to be a *fait accompli* that a considerable part of Germany has been handed over to Poland for occupation. What in that case remains for . . . reparations? Even we in the United States are short of coal. However, in spite of this, we are sending 6.5 million tons of coal to Europe this year. I think this part of Germany, namely, the coal basin, should be regarded as remaining with Germany both in respect of reparations and in respect of food supplies. I think the Poles have no right to take over that part of Germany. We are now discussing the question of Poland's future borders. But I believe we are in no position to solve the question here and that it must be settled at a peace conference."

Thus the participants in the talks had once more returned to the starting point. Truman's attack had misfired. The Soviet delegation had stood firm, resolutely defended its principles. At the end of the session, Truman made yet another attempt to link the question of turning lands in the east of Germany over to Poland with that of reparations.

"I want to say frankly," he declared, "what I think on this question. I cannot agree to the alienation of the eastern part of 1937 Germany in as far as it bears upon settling the reparations question and supplies of food and coal for the whole German population."

This was a quite definite hint that the USA might demand, as the price for handing these lands over to Poland, that in practice no reparations be exacted from Germany. In this case, Washington thought, it would be possible to leave the industrial potential of the Ruhr intact and use it in the interests of the United States. But the Soviet delegation remained undaunted, and argued persistently and convincingly that representatives of the Polish government in Warsaw should be invited to Potsdam. Finally the Western powers agreed to this.

The delegation from the Polish government was headed by Boleslaw Bierut, with whom the Americans and British held detailed talks. The Polish representatives thoroughly grounded their point of view about the western boundary: it should run from the Baltic a little to the west of Swinemünde, taking Stettin into Poland, then along the Oder to the Western Neisse, and along the latter river to the border with Czechoslovakia. The delegations of the Western powers, however, still refused to recognise this line, and pressed for a revision of the understanding reached in Teheran and Yalta. Let us cite the minutes once again:

"Truman: There was a suggestion yesterday to continue discussion of Poland's western frontiers today.

"Stalin: All right.

"Truman: I remember that Mr. Churchill had an additional proposal.

"Churchill: I have nothing to add. I have had a talk with the Polish delegation, and this morning had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Bierut once again. Mr. Eden had a talk with the Polish delegation yesterday. . . I consider that this question is also connected with that of reparations and also with the question of the four Powers' zones of occupation in Germany.

"Truman: I consider Mr. Churchill's remark correct. Mr. Byrnes also met the Polish delegation and intends to do so again. Allow me to make a suggestion on a point of procedure. Since these talks of Mr. Byrnes and Mr. Eden will continue, I think

it will be better to postpone our discussion on this question until Friday.

"Stalin: All right."

The British and Americans, as we see, were eager to tie the question of Poland's western boundary with entirely different problems: reparations and zones of occupation in Germany. The discussion of this matter was resumed after the recess which was called so that Churchill and Attlee could make the trip to London.

The Western delegations now put the Polish question into a "package" that included not only the question of reparations but also the problem of admitting new members into the United Nations Organisation: while insisting that Italy be admitted, they wanted to keep Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania out. When the Soviet delegation pointed to the lack of any connection between these three problems, Byrnes and Ernest Bevin, Britain's new Foreign Secretary, declared they would make "concessions" in regard to Poland's western boundary only if agreement on the other two matters could be reached at the same time. In the end, an understanding was reached on all three problems, including the western border of Poland as proposed by the Polish delegation. The United States and Britain thus failed to get a revision of the principles on which agreement had been reached earlier.

Continuation of the Discussion

While actively seeking to have their own way in the countries liberated by the Red Army, the representatives of the Western powers also tried to deny the Soviet Union any part in deciding problems involving regions and states occupied by American and British forces. An example of this is the discussion of problems in Italy.

It is well known that sizable Italian contingents were active on the Soviet-German front. They advanced as far as the Volga, and took part in the devastation of Soviet territory. It is therefore natural that the Soviet Union was not indifferent as to how Italian problems were resolved. In particular, the Soviet side was interested in the question of reparations from Italy, and

in the fate of Italy's former colonies. Even in the period immediately after Italy's surrender, the American and British military authorities had tried to decide everything without consulting the Soviet representatives on the Allied Control Commission. Now an attempt was made to repeat that tactic on a higher level, as is evident from the discussion of trusteeship that took place at Potsdam. The question arose when the Soviet delegation raised the issue of the fate of Italy's colonial possessions in Africa and the Mediterranean. Here is what the official minutes record:

"Churchill: Of course, it is possible to have an exchange of opinion on any question, but if it turns out that the sides differ in their views, the only result will be that we shall have had a pleasant discussion. I think the question of the mandates was decided at San Francisco. . . We agreed with what was adopted at San Francisco but no more than that. Since the question of trusteeship is in the hands of an international organisation, I doubt the desirability of an exchange of opinion on the question here. . .

"Stalin: We learn from the press, for instance, that Mr. Eden, in a speech in the British Parliament, declared that Italy has lost her colonies for ever. Who has decided that? If Italy has lost them, who has found them? [*Laughter.*] That is a very interesting question.

"Churchill: I can answer it. By steady effort, at the cost of great losses and through exceptional victories, the British Army alone conquered these colonies.

"Stalin: And the Red Army took Berlin. [*Laughter.*]

"Churchill: I want to finish my statement. . . I have in mind the following Italian colonies: Italian Somaliland, Eritrea, Cyrenaica and Tripoli, which we conquered alone and in very difficult conditions. . .

"Now about the statement made by Eden in Parliament, in which he said that Italy has lost her colonies. . . This does not exclude any discussion, during the preparation of the peace treaty with Italy, of the question of whether a part of her former territories should be returned to Italy. I do not support such a proposal, but we do not object to the question of colonies being discussed. . .

"At present, all these colonies are in our hands. Who wants

to have them? If there are any claimants to these colonies round this table, it would be well for them to speak out.

"*Truman*: We have no use for them. We have enough poor Italians at home who need to be fed.

"*Churchill*: We examined the question as to whether some of these colonies could be used to settle Jews. But we consider that it would be inconvenient for the Jews to settle there.

"Of course, we have great interests in the Mediterranean and any change in the *status quo* in that area would require a long and thorough study on our part.

"We do not quite understand what our Russian Allies want."

In the end, this question was turned over to the three ministers of foreign affairs. As things turned out, the fate of these territories was not at all the one Churchill had in mind. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note how he tried to avoid discussing with other members of the antifascist coalition the question of trusteeship over the former colonies of an Axis power, how he sought—as an old "empire builder"—to divide the spoils according to the right of the conqueror, and finally the astounding manner in which he disregarded the native peoples of these territories as if the lands were uninhabited.

There were heated arguments over quite a few matters considered at the conference, but on the whole the discussions and exchanges of opinion resulted in the adoption of important positive decisions. An enumeration of the documents agreed on and confirmed at the Potsdam Conference shows that a very wide range of questions was examined, and that the decisions taken on them could have been of great significance for the development of the whole international situation. A Council of Foreign Ministers was set up; participants in the conference worked out political and economic principles to be followed in treating Germany during the initial control period; agreement was reached on reparations to be exacted from Germany, on the German war and merchant fleets, on the transfer to the Soviet Union of the city of Königsberg and the surrounding area, and on the trial of war criminals. Joint statements were made on Austria, Poland, the conclusion of peace treaties, the admission of new members to the United Nations, trust territories, and so on. The official communiqué on the outcome of the meeting said it had "strengthened the ties between the Three Governments and

extended the scope of their collaboration and understanding". It was declared that the governments and the peoples of the three powers, "together with the other United Nations, will ensure the creation of a just and enduring peace".

The importance of the decisions adopted at the Potsdam Conference is hard to overestimate. But as one reads over the speeches made by Western delegates at the conference, it is impossible not to feel that they were performing a mission they did not find particularly pleasant, one that had devolved on them from a time that was alien to them and already receding into the past—the period of wartime cooperation with the Soviet Union. It was as if they were in a hurry to put this inheritance behind them, to disembarass themselves of it.

Goings-on Aboard the Cruiser *Augusta*

President Truman had closed the Potsdam Conference with the words: "Until our next meeting, which, I hope, will be soon." This is not at all what was in his mind, however. James Byrnes writes that as Truman crossed the Atlantic aboard the cruiser carrying him from war-torn Europe to the shores of a "prosperous" America that had already dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, the President resolved to bar the Soviet Union from any participation in establishing control over Japan. "Force", he thought, "is the only thing the Russians understand."

The question of how the advantage of possessing the atomic bomb might be used against the Soviet Union was already being considered in the United States. Some of the American scientists involved in the creation of the bomb encouraged the "global" fanaticism of politicians with assurances that although the Russians would learn the secrets of the atom in the next two or three years, it would be six or seven years before they could actually create a bomb. "No one seemed too alarmed at the prospect because it appeared that in seven years we should be far ahead of the Soviets in this field,"¹ Byrnes writes. From this the Secretary of State drew far-reaching conclusions: although as yet the USA had "only a twig", rather than a big stick, it would be able

¹ James F. Byrnes, *All In One Lifetime*, p. 284.

to "emphasize firmness" in dealings with the Soviet government as its military might increased.¹

The American diplomats going home on the Presidential ship had lively discussions about the future course of foreign policy. "We were aware and deeply concerned about possible conflicts between the United States and the Soviet Union," Charles Bohlen recalls. "We discussed the atomic bomb and how we might use the security and power it gave us to establish a sound relationship with the Soviet Union. . . We recognized the fact that the Soviet Union would not respond to anything except measures endangering the country and the Soviet system. We speculated about methods we might use, considering everything from a flat ultimatum to the Soviets to withdraw to their frontiers down to various degrees of pressure."²

It would probably be difficult to be more frank about what was on the minds of the men who shaped American foreign policy in those days. Such were the "ideas" they toyed with aboard the cruiser *Augusta* as it took the US delegates home from a conference of the three powers that had lately been Allies. Soon these same ideas were embodied in a militant anti-Soviet course. The *volte face* of the Western powers was completed in September of 1945, when the Council of Foreign Ministers met in London, in accordance with the Potsdam decisions. It was at this time that John Foster Dulles, a champion of the cold war, became involved in the making of American foreign policy. Here is how he himself describes what happened at the conference in London: "At the moment our postwar policy of 'no appeasement' [that is, of no cooperation with the Soviet Union—*Author*] was born; and, on the whole, it has been adhered to ever since. . . Our action at the London meeting has had momentous consequences—as we realized it would have. It marked the end of an epoch, the epoch of Teheran, Yalta, Potsdam. . . The fact that I was at London with Secretary Byrnes as a Republican and with powerful Republican backing enabled me to play an important part in the momentous decision to end the policy of seeking to get agreement with the Russians."³ It cannot be said

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 349, 352.

² Charles Bohlen, *Op. cit.*, pp. 237-38.

³ John Foster Dulles, *War or Peace*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1957, pp. 30, 127.

that Dulles was guilty of immodesty here, or that he overestimated his role; he did indeed make an important contribution to the exacerbation of international tensions.

Addressing a meeting held in the Kremlin to mark the 30th anniversary of the Soviet people's victory in the Great Patriotic War, Leonid Brezhnev said: "The smoke had barely cleared on the battlefields when we found ourselves faced with the cold war which was unleashed by the most aggressive imperialist groups. Torrents of slander against the socialist countries, provocation, atomic blackmail, attempts at economic blockade encouraged by the hope that advantage could be gained from the USSR's temporary economic weakness after the war—the imperialist leaders used all of these tactics to prevent the consolidation of socialism and its growing influence around the world.

"But the forces of reaction which launched the cold war failed to achieve their aims. They were unable to suppress or to weaken socialism."

The imperialists were greatly mistaken in thinking that possession of the bomb had opened a broad and unobstructed road for establishing world domination for America. The Soviet Union soon broke the USA's nuclear monopoly, and the socialist community rapidly grew stronger. These circumstances and others, brought about a fundamental change in the world situation. After many years of vain attempts to dictate their will to the planet, the groups ruling the USA were forced to turn their unworkable doctrines over to the collectors of historical curiosities.

The Potsdam decisions might well have become the foundations for productive post-war cooperation among the major powers of the anti-Hitler coalition. But fate had decided otherwise. Only a few of the decisions were actually carried out—and that only at the earliest stage. The fact remains, however, that in the course of the Potsdam Conference and of other important meetings of the three Allies, it was demonstrated in practice that states with different social systems can engage in effective political and military cooperation in peacetime too.

The Lessons of the Coalition

Experience in Cooperation Between Two Systems

In the preceding chapters, the reader has become acquainted with a number of episodes in the establishment, development, and decline of the anti-Hitler coalition. It is clear from the facts presented that the members of that military alliance experienced various difficulties. Their views were often in conflict, and they were faced with knotty problems as events unfolded. At the same time, it is impossible not to see that there was also a high degree of agreement among the members of the coalition.

It must be remembered that the anti-Hitler coalition comprised states with different social systems. This fundamental difference inevitably affected both relations within the coalition during the war and its fate in the peace that followed.

The anti-Hitler coalition, which took shape at the very beginning of the Great Patriotic War fought by the Soviet people against Nazi Germany, represented a major success for Soviet diplomacy and a victory for the Leninist foreign policy of the socialist state. Reactionary groups in the West made great efforts to isolate the Soviet Union, to deprive it of friends and allies, and to force it to fight single-handed against a heavily armed aggressor. This was the hidden aim of the policy of "appeasement" which the rulers of the bourgeois democracies pursued towards Hitler and Mussolini in the 1930s.

There are some in the West who even now are perplexed: how did Hitler manage to wrap the canny politicians of London, Paris, and Washington around his little finger? Why was it that neither Britain nor France nor the United States would accept the suggestions urgently pressed by the Soviet government, which were aimed at nipping Hitler's schemes in the bud? Why did the Western powers reject the Soviet plan for creating a system of collective security? Why did London and Paris stand idly by while Nazi Germany brazenly seized more and more territory in Europe almost without firing a shot, although at the time Germany was much weaker than either of the Western

powers? Why was Hitler able to achieve his ends with such astounding ease? Indeed, why?

The answer to all these questions is one and the same. Those who held power in the West at that time were ready to let Hitler have his way in everything as long as he performed the "historic mission" proclaimed in *Mein Kampf*—to destroy Bolshevism.

At bottom, Hitler's campaign against the Soviet Union was the culmination of many years of effort by world reaction to eliminate what was then the world's only socialist state, thereby restoring the unlimited sway of capitalism. The old order made a desperate attempt to stop history in its forward course, to block social progress. The Western powers tried everything imaginable to correct the "error of history" by which—as they saw it—a socialist country had been born, to smother Soviet Russia, to keep Marxism-Leninism from spreading and continue to hold nations in bondage to capitalism. Fourteen states joined together to intervene against the new Soviet republic; the notorious *cordon sanitaire* was established with the aim of keeping the ideas of socialist revolution out of Western Europe; the militarists of China and Japan were set upon the Soviet Union; and, finally, bourgeois politicians encouraged and abetted Nazi Germany, which they regarded as their main strike force against Bolshevism.

The interests of international security and the contribution the Soviet Union might make to achieving this goal were the last things London and Paris were concerned with. The Olympian calm the Western powers maintained as Hitler flagrantly violated international agreements, their inaction at the time of the Anschluss of Austria, their betrayal of Czechoslovakia at Munich—all this was payment in advance on Hitler's promise to direct Nazi aggression eastwards, against the Soviet Union. But the policy of appeasing the aggressor finally turned against its architects. The fascists' appetites became so peremptory that the Western powers themselves were faced with mortal danger. The further course of events—first and foremost the Soviet people's heroic resistance to the aggressor and the consistent stand of Soviet diplomacy—led to the formation of the anti-Hitler coalition.

The creation of a military alliance among the three great powers was also aided in no little degree by processes going on

inside the United States and Britain. There was growing disagreement in those countries between those forces which understood that the Soviet people's heroic struggle against the fascist aggressor was at the same time a struggle for the national independence, the freedom, and the very existence of their own countries, and the reactionary elements which opposed cooperation with the Soviet Union in any form. It must not be forgotten that at this time those who wanted to make a deal with Hitler still had a strong voice both in the USA and in Britain. It was their support that Rudolf Hess, the Führer's right hand, was counting on when he undertook his sensational mission to the British Isles in May of 1941.

In the end, politicians who took a more realistic view of the situation gained the upper hand in London and Washington. The United States and Britain became wartime Allies of the Soviet Union, and the "crusade" against Bolshevism by the capitalist powers proved abortive. Joint actions by the members of the anti-Hitler coalition helped to hasten the defeat of the Axis powers.

Prospects for Peaceful Coexistence

In the years that have passed since the Second World War, many works have been written about it. Some of them give a true account of events, others distort them, still others deliberately falsify them. There is also a large number of works on the post-war years. One of the fundamental questions posed in this second group is whether it was inevitable that once the war was over the great powers should turn sharply away from the relationships they had built as Allies.

It is important to avoid a purely emotional approach to answering this question. The relationship that existed among the allies in wartime could not, of course, be continued in peacetime without change. And this is not only because—as history shows—allies, no matter how close their relations in time of war, often begin to go their separate ways once victory over the common enemy has been achieved. The case in hand is more complex than that: it is a matter of relations among states with differing social and political systems, with dissimilar class approaches to

the problems facing them. What is more, sweeping changes had taken place all over the world as a result of the war, changes which the socialist and the capitalist countries regarded in fundamentally different ways.

Is there any chance for the development of mutually beneficial relations between the Soviet Union and the United States? Of course, the fundamental ideological differences between the two main partners in the anti-Hitler coalition of the Second World War period still exist today, as does the difference in the approach these two powers take to the social and political phenomena of our times. But the Soviet Union, guided by the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence between states with differing social systems, is far from believing that these differences make mutually beneficial cooperation an impossibility. The same sort of differences existed at the time of the Second World War, after all, but they did not prevent the USSR and the USA from cooperating in the struggle against their common enemy.

At present, the USSR and the USA have no common enemy in the accustomed and literal sense of the word. There are, however, other threats facing the peoples of the world. The greatest of these is the danger of a new world war, a war which would inevitably be fought with nuclear weapons. The danger is not at all abstract. It lies concealed in the serious "local" conflicts that have sprung up in various parts of the world since the war ended. It was just such "local" conflicts (Abyssinia, Manchuria, Spain, etc.) that dragged mankind into the Second World War. In our times, when states possess weapons of enormous destructive power, the consequences of travelling down that path once more would be disastrous.

The arms race spells another grave danger. And there are other problems, too, that both the Soviet and the American peoples have an interest in solving: the development of economic ties, exchange in the realm of science and technology, environmental protection, etc.

All of this creates the objective conditions for the normalisation of Soviet-American relations. But there are also influential groups in the USA seeking to hinder development in this direction.

In reviewing the lessons derived from the anti-Hitler coalition and the experience of cooperation among the great powers dur-

ing the Second World War, it is impossible not to see that they are still relevant today. The most important of these lessons is that given good will and a sober, realistic approach to existing problems it is possible to establish fruitful cooperation—on the basis of equal rights and security—between states with different social systems.

REQUEST TO READERS

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Valentin Berezhkov

The scholar and publicist, Valentin Berezhkov (born 1916), is the author of seven books and a large number of articles and newspaper contributions published in the mass and scientific press.

Berezhkov was in diplomatic service from 1940 to 1945. In the autumn of 1940 he was a member of the Soviet government delegation at the negotiations with the German government in Berlin and carried out the function of interpreter during Molotov's talks with Hitler and Ribbentrop. In December of the same year he was appointed First Secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Germany. When the Great Patriotic War broke out he returned to his home country and worked in the central apparatus of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In October 1943 he took part in the Moscow Conference of the Soviet, American and British foreign ministers. During the ~~T. D. S. Conference~~ in November 1943 he was the interpreter for the head of the Soviet government Stalin at the negotiations with the President of the USA Roosevelt and the British Prime Minister Churchill. In 1944 he participated in the Dumbarton Oaks Conference where the outlines were worked out for the future United Nations Organisation.

After the war Berezhkov moved into journalism. He was for many years the deputy editor-in-chief of the political weekly *New Times*, the chief editor of the monthly journal *USA: Economics, Politics and Ideology*, published by the USSR Academy of Sciences' Institute of US and Canadian

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